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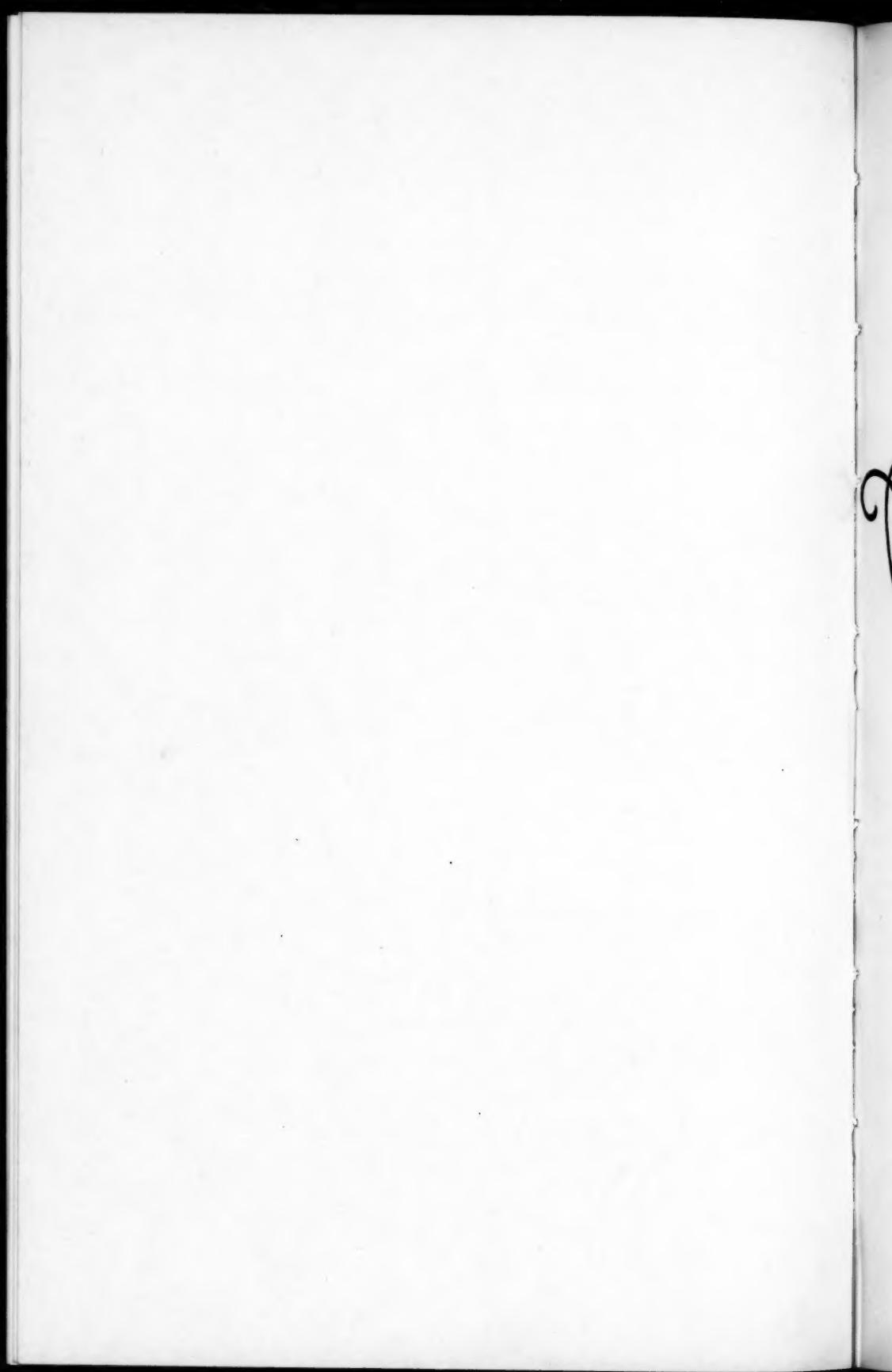
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Midwest Folklore

VOLUME IV • NUMBER
FALL, 1954

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Midwest Folklore

FALL, 1954

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Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

Illinois Issue

Vol. IV, No. 3

Midwest Folklore

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Grace Partridge Smith

For her long and abiding interest in the world's folklore, for her contributions to the collection and study of American folklore, and for her services in behalf of the Illinois Folklore Society, its members, with affection and esteem, dedicate this Illinois issue of *Midwest Folklore* to Grace Partridge Smith, a charter member and past president of the Society.

Born in Templeton, Massachusetts, in 1869, Mrs. Smith later moved to Iowa, where she received her A. B. degree from the State University of Iowa in 1891. A fine scholar, Mrs. Smith is also an accomplished pianist. She studied at the Detroit Conservatory of Music, with private teachers in Buffalo and Philadelphia, and at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Leipzig, Germany.

For twenty years Mrs. Smith served on the faculty of the State University of Iowa, first as instructor in Greek, then as Editor-in-Chief of the *Iowa Alumnus*, and later in various departments as editor, translator, and writer. She resigned in 1938 and came to Carbondale, Illinois, to make her home with her daughter, Mrs. Alexander H. Krappe.

Here, in this state, Mrs. Smith became interested in the folklore of Southern Illinois, the land called "Egypt," and on the folklore of this region, she has published many papers. Today, when most of us would be happy to rest easy, Mrs. Smith is still writing for journals in this country and abroad. She has written for such periodicals as *American Speech*, *Anglia*, *California Folklore Quarterly*, *Classical Journal*, *Den Höhere Skole*, *Folk-lore*, *Hoosier Folklore*, *Illinois Folklore*, *Journal of American Folklore*, *Midwest Folklore*, *Modern Language Notes*, *Names*, *Philological Quarterly*, and the *Southern Folklore Quarterly*. Mrs. Smith also was a contributor to the *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*.

Mrs. Smith is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Theta Sigma Phi, Pi Beta Phi, the American Folklore Society, the English Folk-Lore Society, the Illinois State Historical Society, the Southern Illinois Historical Society, and the American Association of University Women.

Illinois Folklore, Past and Present

BY JESSE W. HARRIS

In 1935, Harry Middleton Hyatt published *Folk-Lore From Adams County, Illinois*, a book of 723 pages, listing 10,949 folklore items collected in a single Illinois county.¹ And, in 1938, Charles Neely's *Tales and Songs of Southern Illinois*, a collection of 270 pages of folk material from the area called Egypt, was published.² During the past twenty years, dozens of articles dealing with Illinois folklore have found their way into print. Interest in folklore has also been sufficient to bring about the formation of two recognized folklore societies in our state: the Chicago Folk-Lore Society (1891-1904), and the Illinois Folklore Society (1946-).

Activities like those cited above indicate a considerable amount of interest over the years in Illinois folklore. The collections of Hyatt and Neely, along with investigations by several other collectors, show that the supply of folklore here is comparable to that of other areas more thoroughly exploited and advertised. While it is true (as pointed out in a recent article³) that we have no counterpart of Mike Fink and Davy Crockett, we do have Abe Lincoln, a folk hero of ample magnitude. And it is perhaps fair to say that sufficient preliminary probing has been done to indicate that Illinois folklore resources are ample in nearly all categories.

Long before the advent of the professional and semi-professional folklorist in their midst, Illinoisans were busy making and enjoying what we now call folklore. How Illinois got its nickname 'the Sucker State' is a case in point. In the absence of a reliable historical explanation, folklore offered its own special answers to the problem. Joseph Gillespie, who in 1827 left his home in Edwardsville to seek work in the lead mines around Galena, noted that the term 'Sucker' "was exclusively applied to Illinoisans, who went up in the spring and returned in the fall. They were so-called because in their roving habits, they resembled the fish known as the *sucker*, which went up the streams in the spring and came down in the fall."⁴ Many early

¹ The Alma Egan Hyatt Foundation, New York, 1935.

² George Banta Publishing Company, Menasha, Wisconsin, 1938.

³ Harold E. Briggs, "Folklore of Southern Illinois," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, December, 1952.

⁴ Joseph Gillespie, *Recollections of Early Illinois*, (1880), pp. 40-3. (Charles Fenno Hoffman, in *A Winter in the West*, (1835), recorded a similar explanation.)

Illinoisans, however, believed the nickname arose from a custom of early travelers of using a hollow weed to suck fresh drinking water from crayfish holes on the prairies.⁵ Davy Crockett, too, was aware of the nickname but had a different explanation: ". . . a Sucker never takes time to get dry, for he hangs to a bottle like a buzzard to a hoss bone. . . ." Both the 'fish' and the 'weed' theories have come down to us by way of oral transmission, and may still be heard.

In like manner, traditional tales purport to explain the origin of many Illinois place names, or their nicknames. This is only one of many ways in which Illinoisans demonstrated their proclivities for folklore. As pointed out above, they showed an active interest in lore of many different types. Before the days of the professional collector, samples of this traditional lore often found their way into print in the travel literature of the times, in local histories, in newspapers, and other media. The interest in local lore is very well illustrated by the rather generous helpings of it preserved in the pages of our older local histories.⁶ A citizen turned historian—like Governor John Reynolds—often had his memory about equally stored with folklore and history. As a result, he usually recorded some folklore in his publications—without being bound, of course, by the restrictions placed upon present-day collectors.

Space does not permit the listing of the numerous individual publications that in earlier times recorded items from the oral tradition, but investigation reveals that for Illinois, as for other areas, the early local writers recognized the importance of local lore as part of the total story of their times. Thus, when the 'folklorist' finally appeared on the scene, he was not entirely without precedent, but was in his own way carrying on the work that his non-professional predecessor had started long before.

As noted above, two recognized folklore societies have had their origin in Illinois. One of the highlights in the growth of professional interest in folklore here was the organization in 1891 of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society, later known as the International Folk-Lore Association.⁷ With an initial membership of about seventy persons, the Society was active from its first meeting, December 12, 1891, until

⁵ B. Botkin, in *A Treasury of American Folklore*, p. 329, quotes a letter from Illinois in an early issue of the *Providence Journal*, supporting this explanation.

⁶ See J. W. Harris, "The Humorous Yarn in Early Illinois Local Histories," *Midwest Folklore*, Fall, 1952.

⁷ Wayland D. Hand, "Chicago Folk-Lore Society," *Journal of American Folklore* (1943), 56:168-170.

1904. Among its members were such well-known Chicagoans as Eugene Field, Mrs. Potter Palmer, Lorado Taft, and Fletcher S. Bassett. Until his death in October, 1893, Mr. Bassett was apparently the moving spirit of the organization. In 1892, he published *The Folk-Lore Manual*, the first number in the Chicago Folk-Lore Society Publications. Mr. Bassett also edited the Society's journal, the *Folk-Lorist*, which ran until the editor's death in 1893. In July, 1893, the Society sponsored the World Folk-Lore Congress of the Columbian Exposition (the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1893). There are no records of Society activities between the Congress and the publication of the memorial volume in 1898.⁸ In 1904, however, a Chicago Folk-Lore Society Fund of \$435.52 was created. By 1943, this fund had increased to over \$1,000, and "has yielded since 1928 an annual cash prize known as the Chicago Folklore Society Prize."⁹

There is not much evidence that the Chicago Folk-Lore Society stimulated any great interest in the collection of the folklore of Illinois. Until about twenty-five years ago, area lore was given little attention here, with the exceptions noted earlier in this discussion and some sporadic interest in dialect and place-names.¹⁰ Within recent years, however, Illinois folklore has more or less come into its own, particularly in the southern section of the state. Mrs. Grace Partridge Smith, David S. McIntosh, and the late Charles Neely were leading spirits in the folklore revival in southern Illinois. Others were quick to respond to the enthusiasm of these leaders, and shortly the need for some sort of organization was recognized. As a result, the Illinois Folklore Society was organized in 1946, with John W. Allen as its first president.

The primary function of the Illinois Folklore Society has been to encourage the collection and publication of our own Illinois folklore. The Society's objectives have been furthered through meetings, through the publication of a bulletin and a newsletter,¹¹ and by joining in the sponsorship of *Midwest Folklore*.

In the 1930's and 1940's, interest in Illinois folklore was also stimulated by the proverb collecting project sponsored by the American

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.* (See *Midwest Folklore*, Spring, 1954, for information concerning this prize, awarded annually by the University of Chicago.)

¹⁰ See W. O. Rice, "The Pioneer Dialect of Southern Illinois," *Dialect Notes*, 1904; Mrs. Laura C. Curtis, "Expressions Heard from Chicago People of New England Antecedents," *Dialect Notes*, 1910; and *A History of the Origin of the Place Names Connected with the Chicago and Northwestern and Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railways*, Chicago, 1908.

¹¹ See *Illinois Folklore*, October, 1947, and April, 1948, (only issues

Dialect Society and by some forays into folklore collecting by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration. Over a period of some five years, the American Dialect Society Project, with Miss Frances Barbour of Carbondale as state chairman, saw the collection of more than five thousand proverbial sayings in Illinois.

One of the significant measures of area folklore interest is the amount of support given to folklore studies by colleges and universities. "The future of folklore study in the United States," writes Dorson, "rests on its penetration into lecture halls and classrooms."¹² Although colleges and universities in Illinois have not given folklore the support it has enjoyed in some other areas, the subject has not been entirely neglected here. The Boggs report of 1940 lists only two such courses in Illinois: Anthropology 340 (University of Chicago) is described as a graduate course in the study of the methods and theories of folklore; and German S101 (University of Illinois) is listed as a "Seminar in Deutsche Volkskunde, with special reference to volkslied."¹³ Obviously neither of these courses had any relation to Illinois folklore. The Dorson report of 1950 lists only one additional folklore course offered by an area university.¹⁴ This course (English 312), inaugurated at Southern Illinois University in the spring of 1949, offers three hours credit in either English or history, and is devoted to the study of the types of folklore, with emphasis on the Illinois area.

In the paragraphs above, an attempt has been made to show something of the growth of professional interest in folklore in the state of Illinois. The fact that Illinois had a folklore society within its bounds as early as 1891 shows that professional interest in folklore here is not, as sometimes stated, something that has developed exclusively in the last twenty-five years or so. However, the professional interest in the collecting and publishing of Illinois folklore itself has, with a few exceptions, been limited to the past quarter of a century. It was this interest in Illinois folklore as such that led to the organization of the Illinois Folklore Society in 1946. Professional

published). The *Newsletter* (first issue, March, 1953), is published at irregular intervals.

¹² Richard M. Dorson, "The Growth of Folklore Courses," *Journal of American Folklore*, (July-September, 1950), p. 345.

¹³ R. S. Boggs, "Folklore in University Curricula in the United States," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, vol. IV, p. 93 ff.

¹⁴ Dorson, *op. cit.*

interest here has also been manifested by the development of college courses in the field of folklore. In short, Illinois has followed conventional patterns in the development of professional interests in folklore.

Southern Illinois University

Carbondale, Illinois

THE CHICAGO FOLKLORE PRIZE

The Chicago Folklore Prize was awarded at the 1954 Spring Convocation of the University of Chicago to Dr. Warren E. Roberts of the English Department of Indiana University. He had submitted his Ph.D. dissertation (Indiana University, Department of Folklore, 1953) entitled AARNE-THOMPSON TYPE 480 IN WORLD TRADITION: A COMPARATIVE FOLKTALE STUDY. This year the Prize carried with it an award of one hundred dollars.

Honorable mention was given at the same time to three other entries: to Professor Charles Speroni of the University of California-Los Angeles for his *The Italian Wellerism to the End of the Seventeenth Century* (1953); to Dr. Joseph Svövérffy of the Irish Folklore Commission, University College, Dublin, for his *St. Christopher Studies: 1. Zur Christophorus-Legende. 2. Folk Beliefs and Medieval Hymns* (manuscript); and to Dr. Margaret Lantis for her "Nunivak Eskimo Personality as Revealed in the Mythology," *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska*, II (1953), 109-174.

Marching Down To New Orleans*

By DAVID S. MCINTOSH

The purpose of this paper is to present an analysis of the singing game, "Marching Down to New Orleans." Six Illinois versions are examined for similarities and contrasts between the lyrics, tunes and actions for playing the games. The Illinois versions are also briefly compared with published versions from other states. All the versions are compared with reference to historical events suggested by the lyrics.

The accompanying chart is intended to show the relationship of the different versions with regard to phrase similarity and difference.

Stanzas common to the six Illinois versions are shown in the chart. In the Strickland version, there is a stanza beginning "My pretty little Pink" that occurs before the stanza in the chart. In both the Strickland and Mescher versions there is a stanza beginning "Where coffee grows on a white oak tree" that occurs after the stanzas shown on the chart. Most surprising of all is the final stanza of the Strickland version borrowed from the song "The girl I left behind me."

It was discovered in checking the published versions that similar stanzas to those in the chart occurred in all of them.

The stanza beginning "Where coffee grows on a white oak tree" is often found to be associated with another game appearing under various titles such as "Green Coffee,"¹ or "Coffee Grows in a White Oak Tree,"² however, it was found to be a part of "We are marching down to New Orleans," in Owens³, in Sandburg⁴, and in Warnick⁵, where it was changed to "Where money grows on white oak trees." This change may have taken place recently and been caused by the high price of coffee. I am told that in the early days the pioneers made coffee by roasting acorns. From the persistence of the phrase

* Read at the Annual Conference of the National Folk Festival Association under the auspices of Washington University, April 7, 1953.

¹ William A. Owens, *Swing and Turn: Texas Play-Party Games* (Tardy Publishing Company: Dallas Texas, 1936), p. 37.

² Leah Jackson Wolford, *The Play-Party in Indiana* (Indiana Historical Commission: Indianapolis, 1916), p. 65.

³ William A. Owens, *Texas Folk Songs* (University Press in Dallas: 1950), pp. 197-198.

⁴ Carl Sandburg, *The American Songbag* (Harcourt, Brace, & Company: 1927), p. 166.

⁵ Florence Warnick, "Play-Party Songs in Western Maryland," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 54, p. 163.

<i>Line Wilson</i>	<i>Obermark</i>	<i>Meagher</i>	<i>Stevenson</i>	<i>Benson</i>	<i>Strickland</i>
1 We are marching down to New Orleans	We are marching down to New Orleans	I'll take my knapsack on my back	We're marching down to old Quebec	I'll take my knapsack on my back	I'll take my knapsack on my back
2 Where the drums and fifes are a-beating,	The drums are loudly beating,	My rifle on my shoulder,	Where the drums are loudly beating,	My gun upon my shoulder,	My gun upon my shoulder,
3 The American Boys have gained the day,	The American Boys have gained the day,	And march Away to New Orleans,	The Americans have gained the day,	March away to New Orleans,	And go away to New Orleans,
4 And the British are retreating.	The British are retreating.	To be a Rebel soldier.	And the British are retreating.	To be a Rebel soldier.	And pass for valiant soldier.
5 The war is all over and we'll turn back,	The boys all armed and we'll turn back,	Quack, quack, and we'll turn back,	The war is all o'er and we'll turn back,	Quack, quack, and we'll turn back,	Quack, quack, and we'll turn back,
6 To the place where we first started.	To the place where they first started.	To the place where we first started.	To the place where we first started.	To the place where we first started.	To the place where we first started.
7 We'll open up the ring and choose a couple in,	We'll open up a ring and choose a couple in,	Oh, rise you up and choose a couple in,	We'll open up a ring and call a couple in,	Arise you up and choose a couple in,	Arise you up and choose a couple in,
8 To relieve the broken hearted.	And leave them broken hearted.	And leave us broken hearted.	For we know they'll come true hearted.	And leave them broken hearted.	And leave them broken hearted.

"White oak trees," it must have been the white oak acorns that were used.

"We are marching down to New Orleans" could qualify under two large divisions of folk songs, first as a play-party tune and second as an American soldier marching tune.

In the six versions discovered in Southern Illinois, reference is made to soldiers marching to New Orleans and to Quebec.

In the War of 1812 the American soldier marched down to New Orleans and defeated the British; they also marched against Quebec in Canada but did not take the city. There is a possibility that the song may have been sung by marching men as far back as 1759 when Wolfe, with his Redcoats and his American Auxiliaries, took Quebec from the French.

Sandburg⁶ gives a version collected in Illinois in his *The American Songbag* under the title "Pretty Little Pink" in which reference is made to marching away to the Rio Grande. Sandburg makes the following observation: "A dance song known in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois became a knapsack and marching tune with Mexican War references."

Owens⁷ version from Texas entitled "My Pretty Little Pink" has the soldiers marching down to Mexico.

Warnick's Version⁸ from Maryland entitled "My Pretty Little Pink" mentions Mexico as the troops' destination.

Newell⁹ includes a version from east Tennessee entitled "My Pretty Pink" which also mentions Mexico.

The following collectors include versions that give Quebec as the destination of the marching men:

Newell⁹ includes versions from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maine, and North Carolina.

Wedgwood¹⁰ presents a version from Nebraska.

Kittredge¹¹ gives a version from Kentucky.

Wolford¹² includes a version from Indiana.

⁶ Carl Sandburg, *loc. cit.*

⁷ William A. Owens, *Texas Folk Songs*, *loc. cit.*

⁸ Florence Warnick, *loc. cit.*

⁹ William Wells Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children Collected and Compared* (Harper and Brothers: New York and London, 1883).

¹⁰ Harriet L. Wedgwood, "The Play-Party," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 25 (1912), p. 271.

¹¹ G. L. Kittredge, "Ballads and Rhymes from Kentucky," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 20, p. 275.

¹² Leah Jackson Wolford, *loc. cit.*

Randolph's¹³ version A is from Missouri.

Among the published collections examined the only version that gives New Orleans as the destination of the troops is Version B in Randolph's¹⁴ *Ozark Folksongs*, contributed by Miss Rena Smithers of Springfield, Missouri. Of the eighteen versions examined, ten use the phrase "Marching to Mexico" or "The Rio Grande."

It is significant to note that three of the versions using Quebec as the destination of the troops came from the northeastern states; of the five versions using New Orleans, four came from Illinois and one from Missouri, and of the three using Mexico, one came from Texas.

It is possible that the soldiers from the East were used in the campaign against Quebec either in 1759 or 1812, that the men from Illinois were used in the campaign against New Orleans in 1812, and that Texas men were used in the Mexican War in 1846.

Many singing games discovered in Southern Illinois can be traced back across the Ohio and Wabash rivers, because the early settlers came into Southern Illinois from the south and the east. The Obermark version came from the vicinity of Metropolis, which is located up the Ohio River about forty miles from the place where the Ohio and Mississippi rivers flow together, just below the city of Cairo. The Mescher version also came from Metropolis.

The Benson version came from the almost forgotten village of Makanda, located about forty-five miles north of Cairo. Makanda is one of the early inland towns that was once an important trading center; now it is just a place to go through on the way to Giant City State Park.

The Stevenson version came from the vicinity of Sparta, located about fifty miles northeast of Makanda. Mrs. Stevenson, a charming, spritely lady near eighty, taught this game and another called "Chase the Squirrel" to a group of us back in 1942. "Chase the Squirrel" is a chasing game in which boy chases girl, and if he catches her, he can kiss her. It is too bad that these kissing games have gone out of style because they must have had considerable merit.

The Strickland version came from Mt. Vernon, located about one hundred twenty miles north of Cairo.

The Wilson version came from McLeansboro, thirty miles east and twenty miles south of Mt. Vernon, not far from the Wabash

¹³ Vance Randolph, *Ozark Folksongs* (The State Historical Society of Missouri: Columbia, Missouri, 1949), III, 296-297.

¹⁴ Randolph, *loc. cit.*

River. Mr. Wilson's folks came into Southern Illinois from Indiana. He sings many of the old-time songs that he learned from his mother. He said that he believed that his mother was the sweetest singer that he had ever heard. He also remembers many of the old singing games and dances. His singing of the old songs is marked by excellent musicianship.

The practice of adapting well-known tunes to new lyrics is very common in folk music. In the Wilson version we find that this has been done. The tune is the Morris dance tune entitled "The Blue Eyed Stranger" in the publication by Novello of *Morris Dance Tunes* by Cecil Sharp, Set 11. From an examination of the tunes found in various collections, it was found that many of them show the definite influence of this tune. I have tried to show the relationship by writing the "Obermark" tune directly beneath the "Wilson" tune. It will be noticed that many of the passing tones and alternating tones have been deleted from the "Obermark" version.

The "Wilson" tune uses only the first, second, third, fifth and sixth tones of the scale of E, omitting the fourth and seventh tones. This scale is generally recognized as the pentatonic scale and can be played on the pipe for one hand permitting freedom to the other hand to beat the tabor (drum), as was the practice in playing music for the Morris dance¹⁵ in the early days.

The "Obermark" tune omits only the fourth tone of the scale and sounds much more conventional because of the cadential use of the seventh scale tone.

The pipe being used to play the "Wilson" tune is an adaption of the "Shepherd's Pipe," made for the purpose of playing this tune and to demonstrate the practicality of a pipe for one hand. Perhaps with enough practice one could beat a drum with the left hand, in the style of a real "Morris Dance" musician.

THAT PRETTY LITTLE PINK

—Obtained from
Martha Strickland,
Mt. Vernon, Illinois.

That pretty little pink, I used to think,
That she and I would marry,
But I've lost all hope of doing that,
So fare thee well forever.

¹⁵ Cecil J. Sharp, *The Morris Book Part I*, Novello and Company, Ltd., 1912, p. 33.

I'll take my knap-sack on my back,
 My gun upon my shoulder,
 And go away to New Orleans,
 And pass for a valiant soldier.

Where coffee grows on white oak trees,
 And the rivers flow with brandy,
 Where the rocks are overlaid with gold,
 And the girls are sweet as candy.

CHORUS:

Oh, that girl, that pretty little girl,
 The girl I left behind me,
 The more I drink, the less I think
 Of the girl I left behind me.

MARCHING DOWN TO NEW ORLEANS

—Obtained from
 Bill Benson,
 Makanda, Illinois,
 by Ora Snyder.

I'll take my knapsack on my back,
 My gun upon my shoulder,
 March away to New Orleans
 To be a Rebel soldier.

Quack, quack, quack, and we'll turn back,
 To the place where we first started,
 Arise you up and choose a couple in
 And leave them broken hearted.

WE ARE MARCHING TO QUEBEC

—Obtained from
 Mrs. Edna Mae Stevenson,
 Sparta, Illinois, 1942.

We are marching to Quebec,
 Where the drums are loudly beating.
 The Americans have gained the day,
 And the British are retreating.

The war is all o'er and we will turn back
 To the place where once we started.
 We will open up the ring and call a couple in,
 For we know they will come true-hearted.

The "Mescher" tune was not included in the comparison of the "Wilson" and "Obermark" tunes, because it has very little melodic relationship to them. It, like the "Wilson" tune, uses only the first, second, third, fifth and sixth tones of the scale. To date it has not been possible to relate it to any published folk tune. It can also be played on the pipe for one hand.

It was not possible to obtain the tunes for the "Stevenson", "Benson", and "Strickland" versions.

Manner of playing:

People have been very ingenious in adapting songs to various game formations. The simplest form discovered that is used in "Marching Down to New Orleans" is a march.

Imagine if you will the largest room in a pioneer home, with all of the furniture moved out either into another room or out of doors; the guests are standing around the room close to the walls, the boys together and the girls together; everyone is anxious to play but all a bit timid to begin. One couple with hands joined behind their backs in skating position start marching around the room, singing, "We are marching down to New Orleans, etc." When they sing the words, "We'll all turn back", they reverse their direction by turning away from each other, without letting go of their hands. They continue to march alone until they sing "We'll choose a couple in," when they either nod to a couple standing around the room or some eager couple joins them in the march. Now both couples march around the room. Eventually everyone gets up nerve enough to venture out on the floor.

This is one of the least painful ways to break the ice and get everyone to participate. At most play-parties or for that matter at any other party, "breaking the ice" was a problem.

Versions using this manner of playing the game are the Wilson version and the Stevenson version.

In the Obermark version, all the players are in a double circle of couples with hands in the same position as in the Wilson version. There are several extra men in the center of the circle. All march in counter-clockwise direction until the words "They all turn back" are sung, when all couples reverse direction in the same manner as is done in the Wilson version. When the words "We'll open up the ring and choose a couple in" are sung, the extra gentlemen in the center tap any gentleman in the double circle on the shoulder and change places with him.

In the Mescher version, all the couples are seated side by side in two rows of chairs placed back to back in the center of the room. One extra couple, with hands joined behind their backs in skating position, march around the row of seated couples as everyone sings. On the words, "We'll turn back," the marching couple reverse direction and continue marching. On the words "Rise you up," every seated couple must change seats, and in the scramble the marching couple get a seat.

No directions for playing the game could be secured from Mr. Benson or from Martha Strickland.

In this paper an attempt has been made to present certain facts and speculations about an almost forgotten song that, at one time in the cultural history of our country, played a minor but an important part in the recreational life of our people.

Going Down To New Orleans

Obtained from Mrs. Edith Travis Mescher, 1946.

I'll take my knap-sack on my back, my ri-fle on my
 shoul-der and march a-way to New Or-leans to be a Re-bel
 sol-dier. Quack, quack, quack and we'll turn back to the
 place where we first start-ed, oh, rise you up and
 choose a cou-ple in and leave us brok-en heart-ed. Where
 cof-fee grows on a white oak tree and the riv-ers flow
 with bran-dy, all the boys are as good as a lump of
 gold, the girls as sweet as sug-ar can-dy.

Wilson
We are march-ing down to New Or-leans where the
Obermark

Wilson
We are march-ing down to Old Que-bec the
Obermark

Wilson
drums and fifes are a- beat-ing, the A-
Obermark

Wilson
drums are loud- ly beat-ing, the A-

Wilson
mer-i-can boys have gained the day and the
Obermark

Wilson
mer-i-can boys have gained the day, the

Wilson
Brit-ish are re- treat-ing. The
Obermark

Wilson
Brit-ish are re- treat-ing. The

Wilson
war is all ov-er and we'll turn back to the
Obermark

Wilson
boys all armed and we'll turn back to the



Wilson

Obermark

Wilson

Obermark

Wilson

Obermark

Southern Illinois University

Carbondale, Illinois

*Bryan's Train*¹

By WILLIAM E. SIMEONE

A half century ago, a red faced conductor named Billy Bryan boarded his train at Gale, a whistle stop near the Mississippi, to begin his daily run over a stretch of Illinois Central Railroad track now called the Mudline. Bryan took his train north and east to Murphysboro and Carbondale, to Herrin and Johnston City. Later in the same day, he returned over the same route south to Cairo, Illinois. Finally, Bryan's train steamed a few miles north back to Gale, and there Bryan and his crew layed over for the night. The total distance covered over the face of Egypt was about two hundred and twenty miles.

The man for whom the train was named began his day by swallowing fifteen shots of whiskey before breakfast; so Bryan's engineer, Bob Allen, tells the story. He heard it from Billy's colored boy. But how much Bryan drank is an unsettled question. There is agreement that he did drink liberally. Arlie Gent, for instance, told me that Bryan always carried whiskey and that he took a drink whenever he felt like it. Jack Hanson said that Bryan was a drinker, sure, but he knew how much he could hold. When you were in a saloon with Billy Bryan, your money was no good.

In the day's operations, Bryan's train made its scheduled stops, but in the hinterlands of Egypt fifty years ago, there were crossings all along the way. Often these were unsheltered platforms where farmers and miners awaited Bryan's train to take them where they wanted to go. And Bryan, by reputation, was extraordinarily considerate of his passengers. For their comfort (and his), Bryan flaunted company regulations. Chris Neely, a railroad man for over fifty years, said that Bryan never turned down a passenger, even if he didn't have money. If you wanted to go fishing down at Bridge's Crossing or Goodman's Ditch, Bryan would let you off. When you wanted to go home, you flagged down Bryan's train. When you had money, Billy collected.

Jack Hanson, still an active sportsman at eighty, remembered one ride on Bryan's train to Wolfe Lake, in Union County, Illinois. "The train master happened to be on the train with me. I asked

¹ I thank W. P. Armstrong, Arlie Gent, Wayne Marten, C. C. Neely, A. West, and Greely Wilson, all of Carbondale, Illinois; Jack Hanson, Murphysboro, Illinois; Robert Allen, Pinckneyville, Illinois, for the stories used in this article. I talked with these gentlemen at different times between April—September, 1953. Special thanks to Frank Loy, Murphysboro, Illinois, for much help in the preparation of Bryan's story and to C. C. Neely, Carbondale, for reading it.

him if it would be all right if Bryan let me off where I always got off. He said sure, it was all right. But Bryan said it was none of the train master's business. He was running the train. He said, 'Pull the cord whenever you want to get off.'

Bryan's independence didn't keep him from being helpful. A retired Illinois Central conductor recalled seeing Bryan helping an old woman from his train in Murphysboro. As she went her way, Bryan said, "God help her, I always can't." Undoubtedly, this woman, like everyone else who knew him, thought Billy was a fine fellow. Mr. Neely guessed that Bryan loaned money to a lot of people. People in those days didn't have much. Billy had a soft spot in his heart for people not in good circumstances.

Bryan's generosity, however, had its other face, and it's this side of the man, more than any other, that keeps his memory alive. Jack Hanson tells a story to illustrate it. One day a friend of his was riding Bryan's train out of Herrin. Bryan asked him for the fare. Hanson's friend reached into his pocket, pulled out a handful of change. Bryan scooped it all up, and went on down the aisle. Hanson's friend was a sport. He didn't say anything.

Wayne Marten tells a story of a man who got on Bryan's train, and, as he had done so frequently in the past, gave Billy a ten dollar bill. The fare was just a few cents. Bryan pulled the cord, went over the bank, got \$10.00 worth of change, and gave the man his change—all in nickels.

Bob Allen, a man now in his eighties, couldn't remember very many stories about Bryan on the day that I saw him. One he did remember, one Bryan himself told him. Two women got on the train at Johnston City to go to Herrin. They gave Bryan more money than a one way fare cost. Bryan put the money in his pocket and kept going. They didn't have time to say anything. On the next day, the two women went home. Bryan, of course, asked them for the fare. They gave him the difference between what he had already taken and the cost of a round trip. They reminded Billy that he had taken too much money in the first place. He protested, saying that it didn't matter; he couldn't see the money anyway. (You bet he could see).

If Bryan did not spare his passengers, neither did he spare the company. W. P. Armstrong (just remember the W. P. A.), a railroad man for the Illinois Central, gave me a familiar Bryan story. "Bryan," Mr. Armstrong said, "threwed the fares up in the air. All that hung on the bell cord was the company's. All that fell was his." Mr. Neely, trying scrupulously to separate fact from fiction,

wouldn't accuse Bryan of pilfering. But his self-conscious grin and his description of railroading when Bryan worked showed what he really thought.

Times have changed. There were a terrible lot of cash fares in those days. Fares maybe amounted to a few cents. In the coal fields, Bryan's train stopped at crossings where there were no ticket agents. Maybe Bryan would pick up forty or fifty passengers. He would need another man just to carry that amount of money around. There wasn't too much supervision. There weren't cash fare slips to fill out, like there are now. Bryan was a good fellow. There never was a fellow like Billy Bryan.

Inevitably, in the mind of the story teller, at least, Bryan became wealthy. Mr. Neely told me that Bryan owned property all along his run, besides business property in Johnston City. He also owned a farm near the present National Guard Armory in Carbondale. When I asked Greely Wilson, a man whom I found sitting outside of the Illinois Central station in Carbondale, about Bryan's property, he said, "Yeah, Billy owned a whole section, six hundred acres of land from the Armory to the Beaucoup Bottoms."

Bryan's cavalier accounting system (Mr. Neely said that Bill always carried a big black book) eventually got him into difficulty. Mr. Armstrong tells one version of the story. Bryan was called before company officials for not handing over all of his cash fares. Bryan heard the charge, admitted it, then airily said: "Gentlemen, you can fire me if you want to, but I've got mine. I've got two of my wife's stockings full of money. If you get another man, he'll fill his, too. And you'll have to start all over again." The company didn't fire him either.

If the company did fire Bryan, and Mr. Hanson says that it did, it took a long time to act. Mr. Neely first saw Bryan's train in 1896, when it still belonged to the old Chicago and Texas Railroad. A local historian, John Allen, has written that Bryan "left the service of the I.C. in 1909, on the eve of his seventieth birthday."² Billy was spared for so long, Mr. Hanson suggests, because company officials liked him. Mr. Hanson once saw Ewing, the division superintendent, walk across the platform to shake hands with Bryan. You don't see a superintendent of any company doing that everyday.

Mr. Hanson goes so far as to compare Billy Bryan's local fame with William Jennings'. When the Commoner was running for President (Hanson didn't say which time) the farmers down in Union

² John W. Allen, *Jackson County Notes* (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale: 1945), p. 6.

County thought it was Billy Bryan. He could have been elected down there, too. Bryan's after-fame doesn't have that much lustre. Still, I would guess that every railroad man in the Illinois Central's St. Louis Division has heard of him. Still more, Bryan's fame has leaped its occupational barrier.

A school teacher from Grand Tower, Mildred Bridgman, remembered seeing Bryan's train in her youth. Mr. Davis, a minister in Colp, told me that Negro miners came to town on Bryan's train. A Carbondale newspaper woman, Virginia Spiller, said that she has heard of Bryan for as long as she could remember. Jack Hanson confidently assured me that every kid from Centralia to Cairo has heard of Billy Bryan. And Bryan was the only railroad man, in an area where they long have been numerous, to whom John Allen gave space in his Jackson County history.

None of these men and women had any exact information about Bryan's early life or his early career. (The Illinois Central no longer has record of him). Mr. Allen has written that Bryan was born on a farm near Murphysboro. There are guesses that he began working on the railroad as a brakeman, probably because every novice began in that job. Bryan was a good brakeman, too; he had every one of his fingers.

But Bryan's occupation and his skill in it is a small matter to the story teller. Bryan's job is merely his *milieu*, and the story teller is impressed with Billy because he is always the master of it. Bryan was irrepressible; not even a railroad timetable could overshadow him.

Billy never had an accident—for which he was responsible. Every day, he met the southbound St. Louis train in Murphysboro. It always had the right of way. Then the rule was changed. One day Bryan's train bunged up the engine of the St. Louis train. Its conductor asked Bryan what he was doing here. Bryan asked, "What you doing here? I've got the right of way." Bryan was right. He had read the rules. Jack Hanson tells the same story: Bryan's train smashed head-on into Barney Blaine's train. Billy got off and met Barney, who wanted to know what was the matter. "Damned if I know," Billy said, "but 't ain't on me."

Southern Illinois University

Carbondale, Illinois

Dan'l Stamps: Tall Tale Hero of the River Country

By WARREN STANLEY WALKER

(WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF RICHARD LOGAN AND GORDON MACLEOD)

If native American humor had yielded early harvests long before the frontier reached the Mississippi and its tributaries, it was there in the rich river bottoms that it bore its finest fruit. Great crops of tales sprang up not only about heroes like Davy Crockett and Mike Fink, but about countless figures of lesser stature as well. Exaggeration, it seems, was almost part of the climate of the valley, and knowing that the climate of a region changes little, if at all, one is not surprised to find some of the same kind of humor flourishing there today.

Of the many tall tales told in the river country, those featuring Daniel Stamps compose by far the most interesting group that I have heard. In Calhoun, Greene, and Jersey counties there is currently a whole cycle of tales in circulation about "ol' Dan'l." Most of these Stamps once told about himself as true accounts of adventures he had experienced and feats he had performed, and many are the folks who still remember the wrath incurred by disbelievers! Others of his stories, however, have been the property of the folk so long that they are frequently presented from the point of view of the third person narrator.

Dan'l's first twenty-five years were spent in the vicinity of Otterville, Illinois, where the Stampses and the Shanks and the Whites were all "a little kin." The few aged descendants of the pioneer families still living in this remote section remember that their parents spoke of "Uncle Dan'l" in those early years in none too kindly a tone. A Rip Van Winkle in his habits, he was, like his Yorker prototype, looked at askance by his more industrious neighbors. "He never worked a day in his life that I can remember, but he had done everything anyone else had—and twice as good, at least twice as good." By the time he came back to Otterville for his last few years—he died in nearby Jerseyville in 1950—he had become something of a legend. "He musta been two hundred years old. Yeah, that's right, 'cause he worked twenty years in Arkansas, twenty years in Nebraska, twenty years in Iowa, thirty in Missouri, and I knew him all my life." Actually, Dan'l was only eighty-four when

he died, though he *had* lived in Arkansas for a while, may well have spent a year or two in Iowa, and probably visited somewhere in Nebraska where his son owns a farm. Occasionally Arkansas or Iowa provides the remote and vague scene so convenient for a tall tale.

The best stories about Dan'l are told in and around Kampsville where he lived from about 1890 until some time in the 1920's, and where he then made extended visits until nearly the end of his life. Calhoun County furnished the ideal setting for a hero of Dan'l's type. A long limestone ridge sandwiched between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, it was, until very recent times, virtually isolated. Even its one land boundary, that on Pike County to the north, permitted little social intercourse with the outside world, for there were few good roads—this is still true—and no rail connections. (It is, in fact, the only county in the state not serviced by a railroad.) Calhoun is an area given almost entirely to fishing and farming—it has produced more than a million bushels of apples a year—and is "undeveloped" in the realtor's sense of the word. Here, as one might expect, a strong oral tradition has always been maintained, for life, which flows along no faster than the lazy rivers, allows ample time for yarn spinning. And miles of yarn have been spun about the colorful figure of Dan'l Stamps who combined in his person elements of Davy Crockett (hunter and fisherman), Major Jack Downing (peddler and watch trader), and Paul Bunyan.

With coon hunting a serious sport in Calhoun County, it would be strange if Dan'l had not been a killer of the ring-tails.

Coming home one day, Dan'l saw a coon and ran it into a big ol' dead sycamore stump. Dan'l shot in the hole where the coon went in, and out rolled a dead coon. He shot again, and another coon rolled out. You know, the coons stacked in that stump were at least twenty feet deep. Dan'l went home and got a rig and shot him a whole wagon box full.

One variant of this tale changes the hole to a crack which widened sufficiently every time the coons breathed to allow Dan'l to shoot at least one of them. Another version holds that the coons were shot through a hole in the *top* of the stump and that they fell back inside; when the stump was filled, Dan'l chopped it down, bunged up both ends, and floated it down the river to St. Louis to sell the skins.

It was likely that at least one memorable hound would have contributed to the reputation of a hunter like Stamps.

Ol' Dan'l had a coon dog. Boy, he really had that coon dog trained. He'd go out and catch a coon any size Dan'l wanted. All Dan'l would have to do was to put a coon stretching board [on which pelts were dried] on the floor to show the dog what size coon he wanted. Dog would come in the house, take a look at the board for a minute, kinda sizin' it up, and then out he'd go. Pretty soon he'd come back and dump down just the right size coon, and when it was skinned, it always fit the board exactly. Dan'l had that dog for years and was always braggin' it up down here in Kampsville. But he finally lost him.

How did that happen?

Well, his wife was ironin' clothes one day, and she had just finished ironin' when somebody called her out in the back yard. 'Stead of puttin' the ironin' board right away, she was in a hurry and put it down on the kitchen floor and ran out to see who was wantin' her. She was gone quite a while, and when she was out back, that coon dog came in and saw that ironin' board on the floor. You know, that dog lit out and never did come back.

One informant insisted that Dan'l never owned a coon dog at all but used a pair of specially trained coon cats. Both cats would chase the coon until he was treed, and then "one would guard the foot of the tree while the other went up and ran the big-eyes out so Dan'l could shoot it." One of the cats lost a leg in a trap one day, and Dan'l had to shoot it, "like anyone else woulda treated a good coon dog."

Coons ran so much in Dan'l's mind that they frequently colored his imagination in areas quite unrelated to the hunt. When Tony, a friend, related a tale about giant mosquitoes, Dan'l's best topper was an account of mosquitoes that looked like and fought like raccoons. A mutual friend of theirs from Kampsville recalled the pair of tales.

Tony told 'bout how one day he was fishin' 'long the river. 'Fore long he dozed off. He was layin' in the shade, but pretty soon the sun moved and got in his eyes. As he woke up, he looked down the river, and there was two big mosquitoes packin' a tree down the bank. 'Bout that time a real big one flew over and scared the two that was packin' the tree. So they dropped it. That tree fell a hundred feet away from Tony, and it's a good thing it did. That tree

was so big it would have killed him if it fell any closer, the branches spread out so far.

Well, Dan'l scratched his head and spit a couple of times, and then he began. He wasn't goin' to be beat that easy! Seems as though he was in Arkansas once and he was a'most broke. A northern cattle buyer came into town and wanted Dan'l to find him some steers. So next mornin' they started out through the swamp. Pretty soon they heard a cow bell ringin', and they started that way. When they got to a clearin', there was a mosquito standin' over his dead cow and ringin' its cow bell to beat hell for the rest of the herd to come. Those mosquitoes were more like coons than mosquitoes. You see, their toenails was so long they could kick a cow in the belly and pierce its heart.

Here were creatures, wild and uncanny, that would have been a match for the bedcats of Ol' Paul!

Dan'l was at times a commercial fisherman, catching great hauls of buffalo, carp, and channel cats in the Illinois River and peddling them around Kampsville. "When Dan'l fished, he always caught 'em—not by the pound, by the ton." He usually fished in the indolent fashion known as "jugging."

One day he was out and just didn't have any luck. He started to round up his jugs in the evenin', and he had 'em all picked up 'cept one, and right then that one started to bob. Dan'l rowed over to the jug to pull the fish in, but before he could, that big cat came up and swallowed the jug and all. Well, Dan'l didn't get any fish that day, but he went back next day with a big heavy tar line that would hold any fish. 'Stead of tyin' it to a jug, he tied it to the ass end of the boat, and he put a whole slab of salt pork on the hook. That pork no sooner hit the water when an eighty-pound cat hit it. Dan'l musta been an hour gettin' that cat in the boat. When he gutted that cat, he found a forty-five pound cat inside it, and inside that forty-five pound cat was a fifteen-pound buffalo and Dan'l's jug. It wasn't even broken.

Perhaps because the fish story itself is suspect, Dan'l often had less luck convincing listeners with this kind of whopper than with others. From a relative who was more than "a little kin" came this story.

Dan'l told me once about a big cat he caught in the

Miss'ippi. Had an awful time gettin' him out of the water. Fish weighed as much as Dan'l. When he got him on shore, he clubbed him to death. That's what he thought, anyway, but that cat was playin' possum on him. All of a sudden he gave a big flop and knocked Dan'l right in the river. By the time Dan'l got back on the bank, that cat had ate his lunch and got away. But anybody knows that's a damn lie.

Everyone who remembers Dan'l or has heard anything about him at all recounts his claim of having killed the biggest turtle ever taken in the Illinois River.

It was nine inches between the eyes, and it musta weighed a ton. When he cleaned the meat out of the thing, he and two other fellers got in the shell and paddled it back across the river to Kampsville.

A shell boat may have been more to Dan'l's liking, anyway, than some of the newer craft. He was always wary of metal boats after one sank with him north of Hardin. It was a sheet-metal dinghy with a half deck under which Dan'l snoozed on days when he was jugging. This time he had just dozed off when the boat suddenly filled with water. Starting up from his nap, Dan'l managed to save only his skin, for "that boat sank so fast he heard it hit the bottom of the river."

On rainy days, when all ordinary business was at a standstill, Stamps was a watch trader. From the Home for the Aged in Hardin comes this account about "ol' buddy Dan'l."

Dan'l always wore a vest, and he carried a watch in every pocket—the best watches in the country. I remember the last trade he made, 'cause it was with John Patton. He sold John a watch for a dollar, and it wasn't fifteen minutes 'fore John was back with a dead watch. Dan'l looked at him and said, 'Damn it, John, you just don't know how to carry a watch!'

Apparently the only person alive who claims to have bested Dan'l in a watch trade is Victor Kremer of Kampsville. Stung badly by Dan'l, Kremer finally evened the score by discovering the trader's weakness in timepieces: the large, old-fashioned, silver watches known as "wagon wheels" and often wound with a key. He possessed himself of one of these in a completely dilapidated state, and, haggling until Dan'l's sentiment for the antique overcame his shrewdness, traded it for one of Stamps's best watches, with plenty to boot.

"I got back at him all right, but it took me more than ten years to do it," Vic admitted.

For one who spent so much time hunting, fishing, and yarn spinning, Stamps was a remarkably successful farmer. He reaped forty tons of hay from a gallon of alfalfa seed. His tomatoes yielded eight bushels to the plant. Potatoes he planted eight rows deep. He would dig a trench to the depth of four feet, scatter potatoes across the bottom, add a six-inch layer of soil, and then repeat the process until he had eight levels of potatoes. The first year Dan'l used this method he had to rent 'land on each side of his farm on which to stack the potatoes. After that fiasco, he dug them only one level at a time, as they were needed, for they were below the frost line and thus protected throughout the winter. While Dan'l was in Arkansas, he was a pickle grower.

Things grow mighty fast in the swamps, you know, and so did his pickles. One day he was a little slow at plantin', and as he looked back on the row, here came the vines. He stood there lookin', and before he knew it, the vines had started to grow up his leg. He thought he'd ought to cut himself loose, so he reached into his pocket for a knife, and damned if there wasn't a big ripe pickle!

It was in Arkansas also that he almost lost a team of good horses harvesting corn—popcorn. The tale about this incident is one very common in Midwestern folklore and has been told about a number of folk heroes, Paul Bunyan among them.

Dan'l said it was so hot that the corn started to pop as he was cuttin' it. With that whole field poppin', it threw the corn a long way up in the air, and it fell back down just like snow. The horses thought it *was* snow, and they started to shiver and shake, and Dan'l said he had to whip them out of the field 'fore they took a chill and died.

Always resourceful, Dan'l coped with the problems occasioned by cold weather as well as with those created by the heat of Arkansas.

One winter out in Iowa the cholera broke out, and the thermometer stayed down at twenty below for two months. It was really bad, 'cause sometimes a whole family would be wiped out. Anyhow, everyone was afraid of the dead ones, so they stacked them in a loft, waitin' till the ground thawed so they could bury them. Dan'l said when Spring came they just dug post holes and buried them stiffs standin'

up. If the tall ones were too long for the holes, they just sharpened their toes a little and drove them the rest of the way down.

That same winter a guy died where Dan'l himself was stayin'. He died upstairs, and everyone was afraid to go near him. Dan'l decided to dig a hole right outside the window and drop the guy in it. When he pushed this guy out the window, he landed on his feet, and it must of jarred the life back in him, 'cause he just walked away.

The achievement of men like Dan'l is usually contagious, and creatures around them catch the spirit. His livestock aspired.

Dan'l had a half-banty hen. It lived out back of his house under a corn shock. The shock stood over a hole about a foot deep. You know, that banty would fill that hole up with eggs in one settin' 'fore gettin' up. Fact is, she wouldn't stop layin' till she rolled right off the top of the pile. If anyone ever asked where his banty was, Dan'l would always say, 'Died from overwork.'

A neighbor corroborated this story when it was repeated to him by the collector, and added another which apparently irked him.

Then there was that damn Jersey cow he was always braggin' up. That cow had such a big bag that he had to build a scaffold for her to stand on when he milked her. He'd milk two teats on one side of the scaffold, and then he'd go around to the other side to milk the other two. That cow's bag was so big he just couldn't reach across it.

Dan'l's hogs are presumably *still* growing, for the tales collected about them in 1954 were noticeably taller than those of the previous year. This is one from the later set.

He used to raise hogs once in a while. Had one of the biggest sows in this part of the country. Dan'l used to keep her in his horse stable. Knocked the partition out between two horse stalls for her, but she was still so big she had to sleep catty-corner. Boy, when she had a litter, there just wasn't room for all of them in there. Them shoats weighed 250 pounds when they were three months old. They were growin' so fast that he put them in crates made of cane stalks when he shipped them to St. Louis so the crates could stretch if they grew too much on the way.

A barber who had known Stamps for years ended his reminiscence of their friendship by remarking, "The world keeps goin', the river runs by, the ferry totes people over to Greene, but ol' Dan'l Stamps is gone." Where he is now the river folk don't know, for it is common knowledge among them that he was kicked out of hell for lying. Visitors to the river country, hearing these tales, know very well where he is: he never left home.

[Principal informants: Victor Kremer, "Bing" Kremer, Frank Dean, "Casey" Jones, Tony Klunk, Frank Kurtz, Harry Morain, all of Kampsville; Harry Fleming, Hardin; Frank Neal, Carrollton; Robert Black, Carrollton; Mrs. Nola Henson, Fieldon; and George Shank, Otterville.]

Blackburn College

Carlinville, Illinois

Some Foreign Proverbs in Southern Illinois

By FRANCES M. BARBOUR

A search for proverbs in behalf of the American Dialect Society several years ago turned up a number of foreign proverbs in Southern Illinois. These are mainly German, for I was very fortunate in enlisting the interest and help of Mrs. Cansuelo Volkert, a newspaper editor in the German community around Columbia and Waterloo. I am quite aware that the possibilities for finding proverbs of French origin around Prairie du Rocher and of Italian origin around Herrin and West Frankfort are as yet practically unexplored. So this report deals largely with unfinished business—with only those foreign proverbs which came to me incidentally in a general quest for proverbial material.

A seventeenth century definition assigns to a proverb the attributes of brevity, sense, and salt. Since I consider salt the principal source of charm, I have perhaps overburdened some of the sayings listed below with both a literal and a free translation in order to preserve the flavor of the original phrasing. For help in the free translation of the rather corrupt German I am indebted to two colleagues who are familiar with colloquial American German, "die schoenste Lengvidge," as I am not.

What impresses one most as he examines the German proverbs is that practically every one has its English equivalent. I shall mention a few of these parallels:

1. Ende gut, alles gut—All's well that ends well.
2. Regends [Regnet's] nicht, dribbles noch—Even if money does not rain, dribbles help. (Every little bit helps.)
3. Stilles Wasser ist tief—Still water runs deep.
4. Die Dummen werden nie all'—All the fools aren't dead.
5. Kurtzes Haar ist schnell geburst'—Short hair is quickly brushed. (A short horse is soon curried.)
6. Wenn die Mädchen pfeiffen, weinen die Engel—if girls whistle, the angels weep. (Whistling girls and crowing hens always come to some bad ends.)
7. Feine Kleide', feine Leute—Fine clothing, fine people. (Fine feathers make fine birds.)
8. Geld regiert die Welt—Money rules the world.
9. Was ich nicht im Kopf hab', das muss ich in die Füsze haben—What I don't have in my head I must have in my feet. (You should make your heels save your head.)

10. Wenn das Pferd fort ist, dann macht mann den Stall zu—One locks the stable after the horse is stolen.
11. Was ich nicht weiss macht mich nicht heiss—What I don't know does not make me hot (won't hurt me).
12. Wer zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten—He laughs best who laughs last.
13. Verschiebe niemals das auf Morgen
Was du heute kannst besorgen—
Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.
14. Mal' nur nicht den Teufel an der Wand;
Wenn man den Teufel nennt, kommt er gerannt—
Do not paint the devil on the wall; if one even names him, he comes running. (When you speak of the devil, he appears.)
15. Morgen rot ist dem sein Tod—Red sky in the morning is deadly (is the sailor's warning).
16. Abend rot, gute Wetter Bot'—Red sky at night means good weather (is the sailor's delight).
17. Schnell und Gut geht nicht zusammen—Fast and good do not go well together. (The more haste, the less speed).

Doubtless the reader will note English parallels for many other proverbs listed below. First let us examine several which give one good advice.

1. Man soll sich nicht ausziehen eh' man ins Bett geht—One should not undress before he goes to bed. (Don't give away your money before you die.)
2. Wer horcht an der Wand
Horcht sein' eigene Schand—
The eavesdropper hears his own shame.
3. Bier auf Wein
Das las' sein
Aber Wein auf Bier
Das dank' ich dir—
Don't drink beer on top of wine, but wine on top of beer
I would thank you for (is all right).
4. Die Morgenstund' hat Gold im Mund;
Wer die versäumt, ist ein fauler Hund—
The early morning has gold in its mouth; he who wastes it is a lazy dog. (He who does not take advantage of the morning hours is a lazy dog).
5. Man soll sich nach der Decke strecken—One should stretch himself no farther than the covers. (One should live within his means.)
6. Spar in der Zeit dann hast du es in der Not—Be saving time, and you will have plenty when you need it.
7. Was lang währt wird endlich gut—What takes long to get done is bound to be good in the end.

The greater number of German proverbs which follow are observations which contain both salt and sense but do not necessarily recommend a definite mode of behavior.

1. Gross Geschrei
Und wenig dabei—
A big noise has little behind it.
2. Ein jeder Tag
Hat seine eigene Plag—
Every day has its own problems.
3. Leicht gewonnen, bald zerronnen—What is got too easily soon disappears.
4. Jeder Topf hat ein Deckel—Every pot has its lid.
5. So wie der Herr
So sein Gescherr [Geschirr]—
As the master is, so is his gear. (A household is like its master.)
6. Aus Warnung wird man Klug—One learns by caution.
7. Glücklich ist
Wer das vergisst
Was einnal nicht
Zu ändern ist—
He is lucky who can forget what can't be helped.
8. Undankbarkeit ist der Welt Lohn—Ingratitude is all the world pays one.
9. Die dummste Bauern ziehen die dicksten Kartoffel—The most stupid farmers grow the biggest potatoes.
10. Bei Nacht sind alle Katzen grau—All cats look grey at night.
11. Da hilft alle Mittel nicht—All is lost.
12. Schön vergeht
Gut besteht—Beauty fades; virtue is lasting.
13. Wer den Schaden nicht hat, braucht für den Spott nicht sorgen—He who has no misfortune, does not have to worry about being laughed at.
14. Ein langes Fädelchen, ein faules Mädchen—A lazy girl uses a long thread.
15. Geduldige Schaafe gehen viel in ein' Stall—Many patient sheep fit into one stall. (Patience will endure a great deal.)
16. Wenn's einem Esel wohl geht, dann geht er auf Eis und bricht ein Bein—When a mule gets cocky, he walks on ice and breaks a leg.
17. Morgen, Morgen, nur nicht heute,
Sprechen alle faule Leute—
Tomorrow, tomorrow, not today
All the lazy people say.
18. (a) Ein fauler Esel tägt sich schnell tod—* A lazy ass soon kills himself by drawing too big a load.
19. Spinne am Morgen
Bringt Kummer und Sorgen
Spinne am Abend

*Other versions:

- (b) Ein fauler Esel schleift sich auf einmal tod.
- (c) Der faule Esel trägt sich am ersten tod.

Erquickend und labend—Spider in the morning means grief and sorrow; spider in the evening means refreshment and pleasure.

20. Wir haben jetzt gegessen
Und sind satt
Und hätten nicht mehr essen können
Wenn wir hätten mehr gehabt—We have eaten and couldn't eat more if we had it.
21. Wo nichts ist, hat der Kaiser das Recht verloren—Where nothing exists the Kaiser has no power any longer. (You can't get blood out of a turnip).
22. Junge, mach' die Augen auf;
Heiraten ist kein Pferdekauf—Be careful, young people; marriage is not buying horses.

There is one German proverb that is merely a clever play on words:

Eifersucht ist eine Leidenschaft die mit Eifer sucht was Leiden schafft—Jealousy is a passion which seeks sorrow with zeal.

I have very few foreign proverbs besides those of German origin. I have listed below, however, several in French and a few from other foreign sources.

1. A bon chat, bon rat—To a good cat a good rat—The reward suits the deed.
2. Dieu mesure le froid à la brebis tondue—God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.
3. Aussitôt dit, aussitôt fait—No sooner said than done.

The one Italian proverb in my collection is the following:

Bandiera vecchia onore di capitale—An old flag is an honor to the capital. (Fine things although badly worn are honorable).

The remaining foreign proverbs were submitted in English but were stated by their contributors to have originated in certain European countries. The following two are said to be Danish:

Though a bird may fly over your head, let it not make a nest in your hair,

He who would make a fool of himself will find many to help him.

One is said to be Hungarian in origin:

Divine are many hands; cursed are many mouths.

Another comes from the Dutch:

He who would eat with the devil must have a long spoon.

As the title of this article implies, these are merely "Some foreign proverbs in southern Illinois." The surface has merely been scratched. The salt of the old sayings and their sense, however, seem excuse enough for presenting them for publication.

"Egypt"— A Wandering Place-Name Legend

By HERBERT HALPERT

That Southern Illinois has the nickname "Egypt" is attested to by folklorists, popular writers, historians and place-name students. Mrs. Grace Partridge Smith has recently demonstrated that the name is one that is fully accepted and used with pride in the area.¹

There is an approved historical explanation of the nickname. In 1818 a St. Louis business man platted the town of Cairo at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. He probably gave it the Egyptian name because of the popular analogy between the Mississippi and the Nile, each its country's major river; possibly also because the regular inundation of the area around Cairo, Illinois, resembled the annual overflow of the Nile river. The naming of Karnak and Thebes, two other southern Illinois towns, reinforced the Egyptian flavor of the region and helped to fix the popular name.

The historical explanation for the name is neither as popular nor as colorful as the traditional yarn, which ascribes the nickname to events in the first third of the nineteenth century. One writer states that as the result of the "winter of the deep snow" (1830-1831) not all of the corn in northern and central Illinois was harvested. Then a late spring was followed by a killing frost on September 10, 1831, which ruined the immature corn. Southern Illinois, however, had a plentiful supply of corn.² Neely's brief reference to the story mentions a drought on the prairies, rather than frost, as the cause for the shortage of corn in the north.³ Mrs. Smith cites two references to early shortages in upper Illinois. One gives 1824 as the date; the other mentions that such shortages were frequent in the first part of the century. Both references mention that men went down to fertile southern Illinois where there was plenty of corn for sale.⁴

¹ Two articles reprint or summarize nearly all the published references to the Illinois stories of the naming of Egypt: Grace Partridge Smith, "They Call It Egypt," *Names*, II (March 1954), 51-54; Harold E. Briggs, "Folklore of Southern Illinois," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, XVI (December 1952), 208-209.

² "How Egypt Got Its [sic] Name," (anon.) *Egyptian Key*, II (March 1947), 31.

³ Charles Neely, collector, and John Webster Spargo, editor, *Tales and Songs of Southern Illinois* (Menasha, Wis., 1938), p. 3.

⁴ Smith, op. cit. p. 52.

Nearly all references to the popular story stress that the Illinois pioneers noted the parallel between their plight and trip to the south and that of Joseph's brethren, in the story in *Genesis*, who were driven by famine to travel to Egypt to buy corn from the huge stocks stored there. Southern Illinois, therefore, became known as "Egypt." The corn which figures in the Biblical story is not, of course, the maize or Indian corn of this country.

The minor variations in detail are proof that this story is traditional in Illinois. So far as I know, however, no one has yet called attention to the fact that southern Illinois is not the only area about which this story is told. Two other regions, one in New Hampshire and one in Texas, are also called "Egypt," and each has much the same traditional explanation of its name. Furthermore, two small towns, New Egypt in southern New Jersey and Egypt, Mississippi, have place-name legends that are variants of the "going to Egypt for corn" story.⁵

The New Hampshire story sets the time of the corn shortage as 1816. "On the road from Lancaster to Mt. Orne, or South Lancaster as it used to be called, just a short distance from the village, is 'Egypt', so called because of the failure many years ago of the corn crop in this town save that which was planted in this vicinity of Egypt which grew in a remarkable way and yielded abundantly.

"As the people were obliged to come here for corn, they were reminded of the story in the Old Testament of Joseph's brethren who were sent to Egypt to buy corn. In this way the name was acquired, and ever since 1816, the drive in this direction has been called 'going to Egypt.' "⁶

The Texas story dates the bad year as 1834, which is close to the year given in one of the Illinois versions. "The yarn goes that about 1834 a group of colonists east of the Colorado River, in what is now Wharton County, raised a bountiful corn crop while planters elsewhere raised none. That fall from the Navidad, the Lavaca, the Brazos and the San Bernard they came to buy corn from the well-stored cribs on the Colorado. Generally well read in the Bible, these colonists knew the story of how Joseph's brethren found corn in Pharaoh's land, and they called the place of the corn crop amid the wilderness of Texas—Egypt."⁷

⁵ There is a village named Egypt in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, and another in eastern Pennsylvania. In the reference books at my disposal I could not find a place-name legend for either, though one might well exist.

⁶ Mrs. Moody P. Gore and Mrs. Guy E. Speare, *New Hampshire Folk Tales* (n. p.: New Hampshire Federation of Women's Clubs, 1932), pp. 234-235.

⁷ J. Frank Dobie, "Stories in Texas Place Names," in *Straight Texas*

Although there is no mention in either the New Hampshire or Texas report of any contact between the region and southern Illinois, these two regional place name stories obviously belong to the same tradition as the Illinois version. Apparently both the New Hampshire and Texas regions are quite small; neither has achieved the dignity of being listed in a national gazetteer.

The two village stories introduce a different element: war-time shortages. Here is the version given in the New Jersey volume of the *American Guide Series*. "At the time of the Revolution the village was known as Timmons Mills. After the victory at Trenton in December, 1776, Washington needed grain for his army. Benjamin Jones, one of the General's New Jersey advisors, had a large quantity of buckwheat flour and cornmeal stored at the mills; he sent his secretary, Joseph Curtis, to bring the milled grain to Trenton. Hailing the welcome arrival, Washington said: 'Joseph has been in Egypt and gotten the corn.' The village was Egypt until 1845, when the prefix 'New' was added to avoid confusion with other Egypts. Center of a fine farm and dairy section, New Egypt still has a never failing corn crop."⁸

The story is so delightful that I regret having to point out that the 1845 date for the "New" in Egypt is an error. It was certainly "New Egypt" before 1834, according to the listing in Thomas F. Gordon.⁹ Gordon also states: "The name is derived from the excellent market the mills afforded for corn."

We have no reason to be surprised at finding a discrepancy between the "historical" explanation and the legendary one. We have observed it in the Illinois story. A similar lack of agreement between the historical and legendary origin tales is found in Mississippi. According to the state guide: "Egypt . . . was established just prior to the War between the States . . . It was named for the variety of corn grown here. During the war corn was hauled here to await shipment to the Confederate army, but before this could be accomplished Federal troops passed through and burned it."¹⁰

We are indebted to William Faulkner, the distinguished Mississippi novelist, for the knowledge that Egypt, Mississippi, got its name

(*Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society*, No. 13, Austin, Texas, 1937), p. 51.

⁸ Federal Writers' Project, *New Jersey: A Guide to its Present and Past* (New York, 1939), p. 617.

⁹ *A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton, 1834), p. 197.

¹⁰ Federal Writers' Project, *Mississippi: A Guide to the Magnolia State* (New York, 1938), p. 274.

"because there was corn there when it was nowhere else in the bad lean times of the old war." ¹¹ Mr. Faulkner's version, though it lacks a narrative, implies a popular knowledge of the Bible story, and assumes the parallel of men going from the region of shortage to the area of plenty to get corn.

What conclusions can be drawn from the existence of these five versions of the corn in Egypt story? The Illinois, New Hampshire, and Texas forms are so strikingly similar as to make one tradition; the New Jersey and Mississippi reports seem to be a related but variant form in which a war-time shortage replaces a shortage from natural causes.

To the social historian the legend offers new, if limited, evidence that the American pioneer was very familiar with the stories in the Bible. For the folklorist this legend raises a familiar problem: has this place-name story been re-invented three separate times, or five times if we include the last two versions? Or did the explanation of the name start, let us say, in New Hampshire and travel south and west with the pioneers, to be reapplied in similar situations? Although I must submit the case as "Not Proven," I favor the latter theory. Such a pattern of adaptation to new surroundings is true of many other localized legends.

Murray State College

Murray, Kentucky

¹¹ "Mississippi," *Holiday*, XV (April 1954), 42.

More Lincoln Lore

BY GRACE PARTRIDGE SMITH

An unusual bit of Lincolniana came to the writer's attention recently while consulting an article¹ on the ways of sportsmen, the tokens they cherish and the mascots they carry with them into their contests. In this source, it is stated that a 4-leaf clover, once in possession of Lincoln, came into the hands of the international tennis champion of the 1920's, William T. Tilden II. It was presented to him, as he states, by a friend² on the day before he defeated Gerald Patterson at Wimbledon and was carried by him into succeeding games. Thereafter he never suffered defeat until he lost to the French player LaCoste. After this, as it happened, the clover was either misplaced or lost and only recovered the year before he won back the American title (1929).

Opportunity for verification of this clover as a Lincoln relic has not been forthcoming; neither is the writer of this article aware whether the story has a wide currency or not. A Lincoln authority consulted stated only that the matter was an "odd coincidence," acknowledging interest in having had it brought to his attention.³ From such meager suggestions, it is inferred that the existence of a Lincoln clover has not broken through into pages of the many writings about Lincoln. Because of present inability to verify this relic as an authentic one, it is clear that until more facts are brought to light the story of this particular clover must be regarded as one more item in the ever-growing body of Lincoln lore.

Whether Lincoln actually believed or not in the 4-leaf clover as a harbinger of good fortune, this superstition, well-nigh universal, was certainly a part of his rich heritage of folk-beliefs from Kentucky and Indiana tradition. It was probably even more common than that which predicts *seven years of bad luck after breaking a mirror*, *a cure for rheumatism by carrying a buckeye in the pocket*, *ill-luck on stepping over a broom*, all three of which with others are recorded as superstitions of the early day in the states referred to.⁴

¹ Karl Wehrhan, "Der Aberglaube im Sport," *Wort und Brauch*, Bd. XXVIII, (Breslau, 1936), pp. 89-90.

² The donor is stated to have been a Mrs. Benjamin Lathrop, of London.

³ In a letter, May 1, 1950, from J. Monaghan, former State Historian of the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.

⁴ Cf. William E. Barton, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Indianapolis, 1925), Vol. I, p. 110; Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln* (Boston & New York, 1928), Vol. I, p. 50; Arthur Brooks Lapsley, *The Writings of Abraham Lincoln* (New York & London, 1923), Vol. VIII, p. 18; Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (New York, 1926), Vol. I, pp. 66-68.

If we may assume that this somewhat visionary clover was actually cherished by Lincoln, *where* and *when* did he cull this talisman? This query leads us to all sorts of romancing: did he press the leaf between pages in his Bible, put it in his shoe, or sew it into his clothing? Such are some of the traditional ways of courting good-luck with this emblem. Although none of these acts may have been carried out, it is, at any rate, almost certain that he was at least aware of the reputed magical power of this oddity.

Enthusiastic references by the "King of the Nets" to possession in the first quarter of the 20th century of this mascot-clover allows the inference that he regarded this relic as a potent factor in carrying him to victory; just as certainly, he ascribed defeat to loss of it. It should be emphasized here that our interest is not in the prowess of the former tennis champion or in his triumphs, but rather in the nature of his relationship with this clover-of-all-clovers and in the belief of a supernatural virtue emanating from it on account of having once belonged to President Lincoln, folk-hero and martyr.

Disregarding any "ifs" in connection with this clover story and taking it at its face value, we have here a clear-cut example of *contagious magic*. On this point, it may be of interest to recall the discussion of relics by an eminent anthropologist and folklorist⁵ who writes:

The dead man's soul or his power or qualities may work from his body or from any fragment of it. From his clothes, or from *any object* or part of any object with which he has once been in contact. *Any one who wears or carries these, who touches them, who prays to them, or who uses them in a variety of other ways benefits by his action.* The soul or power of the dead man is so far subject to him, or at all events, aids him in various ways [These relics] are valued in proportion to the extent of power, strength, miraculous gifts, or saintliness of the person to whom they originally belonged as well as the love and respect in which he was held.⁶

Checked with this dictum, the story of the clover as narrated in the source referred to in the first paragraph of this article stands as a clear example of an idea that has persisted through all ages and cultures.

Carbondale, Illinois

⁵ The Reverend Canon J. A. Macculloch, author of *The Childhood of Fiction, a Study of Folktales and Primitive Thought* (London, 1905).

⁶ Cf. James Hastings, Ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh & New York), Vol. X, p. 650, col. 1 ("Relics"). Italics in the quoted excerpt are mine.

Folklore News

Michigan Folklore Society.—At the March 27th, 1954 meeting, the following officers were elected: President, Gertrude Kurath; Vice-President, William W. Heist; Secretary, Florence Wilcox; Treasurer, Gloria Dorson; Exec. Secretary, Ivan Walton; Editor, Richard M. Dorson. The following papers were presented: "Folklore in Belgium," William Heist; "Report on the Place Name Project of the Michigan Folklore Society," Ivan Walton; "Pioneer Architecture of Michigan," Howell Taylor; "Old Marster and Clever John in Michigan," Richard M. Dorson; "Report on Michigan Folklore Research," Aili Johnson; "Folklore Tradition in Puppetry," Charlotte Timm; "Musical Composition in Primitive Culture," Bruno Nettl.

Jo Stafford Fellowship in American Folklore.—The Jo Stafford Fellowship in American Folklore for 1954-55 was awarded to Ray B. Browne, University of California at Los Angeles, for a project on Alabama Superstitions and Other Alabama Collectanea. Honorable Mention was given to Anne Grimes, Ohio State University; Américo Paredes, University of Texas; and Beatrice Weinreich, Columbia University. This is the first award of the Jo Stafford Fellowship, \$300 being provided annually by Miss Jo Stafford for a meritorious project in the field of American Folklore. The present fellowship has supplanted the Jo Stafford Prize in American Folklore, first established six years ago.

Western Folklore Conference.—The fourteenth annual Western Folklore Conference was held July 15-16 at the University of Denver, meeting under the direction of Levette J. Davidson jointly with the University's Writers' Workshop and the Colorado Folklore Society. The following papers were presented: "'The Birth of Robin Hood'—an Unpublished Ballad," John Greenway; "A San Juan Indian Folk Drama," Vera Laski; "Old-Time Cure-Alls," Theresa S. Westermeier. Levette J. Davidson, Arthur L. Campa, Ben Lumpkin, and Caroline Bancroft participated in a symposium of "Recent Developments in the Field of Folklore." Following the chuck wagon supper, which has been an annual event at the Conference, a program of folk dances was given in an "Around the World Festival." Featured besides American square dancing, and dances of the American Indians, were dance groups representing the following countries: England, Sweden, Spain and Latin America, Czechoslovakia, Poland,

Lithuania, and the Ukraine. Arthur L. Campa served as master of ceremonies, while Fay and Drusilla Feree led the informal folk dancing which concluded the evening's entertainment.

Folklore Institute of America.—The fourth session of the Folklore Institute of America met at Indiana University, June 16-August 12. Stith Thompson served as Director of the Institute in addition to offering a seminar in The Folktale and Allied Forms. Assisting as members of the staff, and teaching courses as indicated, were the following: Bruno Nettl, Introduction to Folk Music; Dov Neuman, Jewish Folklore; Warren Roberts, The English and Scottish Popular Ballad (seminar); Wayland D. Hand, American Folklore, and a seminar in Folklore Theory and Techniques. Assisting Professor Hand in these two courses, and participating in other classes as well, were the following visiting staff members: Otto Andersson, University of Abo, Finland; Louis C. Jones, New York Historical Association; Richard M. Dorson, Michigan State College; Thelma G. James, Wayne University; Aili K. Johnson, Michigan Folklore Society; Herbert Halpert, Murray State College, Kentucky; Helen Creighton, National Museum of Canada; William H. Jansen, University of Kentucky. Other visiting folklorists who took part in the proceedings were William R. Bascom, President of the American Folklore Society, Ruth Ann Musick, West Virginia Folklore Society; Frances Lee Utley, Ohio State University, John Ball, Miami University; Thomas A. Sebeok, Editor, American Folklore Society; John Ashton, Indiana University.

Colorado Folklore Society.—At the annual meeting of the Colorado Folklore Society, held July 15 in conjunction with the Western Folklore Conference, the following officers were elected to serve for 1954-55: Ruth Underhill, president; Levette J. Davidson, vice-president; Ben Lumpkin, secretary; Caroline Bancroft, treasurer; Arthur L. Campa, editor.

Book Reviews

FOLKLORE, FACT, AND FANCY IN RECENT CHILDREN'S LITERATURE By DOROTHY HOWARD

American Folk Songs for Christmas. Ruth Crawford Seeger. Illus. by Barbara Cooney. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953.) 80 pp. \$3.00.

Three Apples Fell from Heaven: Unfamiliar Legends of the Trees. Natalia Belting. Illus. by Anne Marie Jauss. (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953.) 158 pp. \$2.50.

The Remarkable History of Tony Beaver, West Virginian. Mary E. Cober. Illus. by W. D. Hayes. (New York: David McKay, 1953.) x + 142 pp. \$2.75.

Folk Tales from Roumania. Ion Creanga, transl. Mabel Nandris. Illus. by Iza Constantinovici-Hein. (New York: Roy Publishers, 1953.) 170 pp. \$2.75.

The Cowboy's Own Brand Book. Duncan Emrich. Illus. by Ava Morgan. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1954.) xiv + 82 pp. \$1.50.

Holidays Around the World. Joseph Gaer. Illus. by Anna Marie Jauss. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953.) ix + 212 pp. \$3.00.

The Soup Stone. Maria Leach. Illus. by Mamie Harmon. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1954.) 160 pp. \$2.75.

Journey Cake Ho! Ruth Sawyer. Illus. by Robert McCloskey. (New York: Viking Press, 1953.) 45 pp. \$2.50.

The Beatinest Boy. Jesse Stuart. Illus. by R. G. Henneberger. (New York: Whittlesley House, 1953.) 111 pp. \$2.25.

The late Ruth Crawford Seeger was a music scholar, folklore scholar, teacher of children, mother of four and wife of Charles Seeger. When she compiled and notated folk songs for children (this is her third such book), she knew what she was about. Fifty-five songs and one fiddle tune in *American Folk Songs for Christmas* are arranged in three sections "to tell the Christmas story step by step, from song to song." The first section is "Stars and Shepherds"; the second, "Mary and the Baby"; and finally, "Praise and Festivity." Thirteen of the songs and the one fiddle tune "were notated from recordings of traditional singing and playing made by folklorists and deposited in the Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress in Washington. One was notated from a commercial recording of a folk singer, one direct from the singer. Eight were found

in shape-note books and the remainder in folklore journals and collections." Documentation is thorough. Mrs. Seeger gives the specific source for each song; and acknowledges those who helped directly and indirectly with the book.

In the introduction, the author discusses the nature of the songs and their places in Christmas customs of many American localities. "The songs grew out of and were used in the old-time American Christmas, not a Christmas of Santa Claus and tinsel trees but of homespun worship and festivity." What a folk song is and how folksingers sing is explained with simple clarity.

The illustrations are in black and white. Barbara Cooney's beasts, birds, flowers, trees, and human creatures are expressed with a loving compassion and gentle whimsy that suggest reverence for all God's creation. The publishers are to be commended for a handsome format, for permitting sufficient space for adequate documentation and for recognizing and including Mrs. Seeger's helpful counsel.

This collection of songs presents new material; many have never before seen print. The introduction can well serve as a teacher's handbook (not of prescription but of description and analysis) from which the teacher can learn dependable facts and sensible approaches to teaching. Mrs. Seeger explains how the volume grew out of her teaching experience (as did her previous books, *American Folk Songs for Children* and *Animal Folk Songs for Children*).

Folklorists in all areas of folklore who have a yearning to publish books for children can learn much from Ruth Seeger.

"Trees" is the key word chosen to give a semblance of unity to *Three Apples Fell from Heaven*, a book of stories "from all over the world." The stories are told for children, with an introduction addressed to children. Yet the purpose of this volume is a puzzle.

Natalia Belting is assistant professor of history at the University of Illinois. To document her book of "folk tales" she offers a two-page end section "From Library Shelves" in which are listed five books and two folklore periodicals as general references. She indicates that all her stories came from printed sources but states the specific source of only one story—the "Laurel Maiden." "A great many of the tales that are retold here come from summaries I found in the *Folklore Journal* and in the *Journal of American Folklore*," says Professor Belting, waving the names of two respectable scholarly journals like a magic wand over the lot. This is the usual substitute for documentation found in too many books shelved as

398.2 in libraries. And that is all the reader is offered about the folklore background of the stories or about the author's methods of telling except for the jacket blurb statement, "In writing her new book she had, she says, the assistance of five cats and one English bulldog."

The title and subtitle hint that this is a source book for teachers looking for a tree story to read in honor of Arbor Day or National Tree Week; but the stories themselves indicate that this is a false lead because the presence of a tree (or trees) sometimes appears incidental rather than significant in a tale.

The stories (all told by the "once upon a time" formula) are apparently aimed at ten to twelve year olds. Yet the five page introduction begins, "Have you ever met an elf? Or a pixie or a brownie or a troll, or maybe a witch? No? Gracious . . ." The end paragraph of this five page section begins, "There are so many stories about trees! We could sit here all day talking about them!" The pixie-elf talk is cute; it strikes a patronizing note even for six year old American children. And ten year olds, able to read the book, will probably never reach the fifth page invitation to sit all day talking about trees. I doubt that any healthy child of any age wants to sit all day talking about anything.

The Remarkable History of Tony Beaver would not merit a review in a folklore journal except for two facts extraneous to the book itself. First, the book has received reviews in two reputable literary periodicals by two expert reviewers of children's books, who accept Mrs. Cober's volume as unquestionable folklore while questioning its merit as literature. Second, the material is classified as folklore on library shelves.

I fully agree with the reviewer of *The New York Times*¹ in the statement, "the telling of it is less satisfactory; the joking asides to the reader are often heavy handed"; as well as with the reviewer of *The Horn Book Magazine*² in labelling the story, "without the full flavor and zest of our best tall-tale literature."

But when the reviewers call this "fresh and lively material for an American folk tale,"³ and say of Mrs. Cober's *Tony Beaver*, "His exploits, heretofore presented to children only in collections, make a welcome volume filled with facetious humor,"⁴ I must disagree with

¹ *New York Times*, November 29, 1953, p. 48.

² *The Horn Book Magazine*, October, 1953, p. 361.

³ *New York Times*, op. cit.

⁴ *The Horn Book Magazine*, op. cit.

the implied and stated approval of the folklore merit in this popularized rendition.

The author of *The Remarkable History of Tony Beaver, West Virginian* is a Pennsylvanian, now a school teacher living in New York. Whether or not she ever set foot in West Virginia is not clear. The jacket blurb informs us that "About a year ago, the exploits of West Virginia's tall-tale hero captured the attention and imagination of Mary Elizabeth Cober, a contributor of articles, stories, and puzzles to magazines and newspapers. She put down one or two of the stories for a children's newspaper, and this was the beginning of an adventure in research and writing."

What research means in this context is one of Mrs. Cober's private puzzles. In a two page "Author's Note," she lists five sources, two of which are linked to specific stories. Of these two sources, one is Pocahontas Operators Association, Bluefield, West Virginia, whose treatise (she does not name it) was presumably an advertising tract. Of the five listings, the one upon which Mrs. Cober could have justifiably depended for some folklore authenticity was Miss Laura J. Rector, "for use of her thesis, *Prose Legends of West Virginia*, and for the Tony Beaver tales she told." However, Mrs. Cober says nothing of the availability or location of the thesis, she does not say which stories came from Miss Rector, either from her thesis or from her telling, nor does she give any indication of the extent of her dependence on Miss Rector. Of her methods of retelling she makes no mention.

Another important consideration Mrs. Cober's book presents is the historical framework she has devised. Upon this point there is less unanimity of opinion between the two book reviewers quoted previously. *Horn Book Magazine* says, "Woven into the background is a strong thread of history: people, events and social trends, from the Revolution to late-nineteenth century."⁶ This strongly implies approval. *The New York Times* says "the historical background is not integrated with the story."⁷

With the latter opinion I can agree but I must go further to say of the historical background, as well as of the geography, that the author sadly confuses fact and fiction in presenting people, events and places. In considering the combination of fact (historic and geographic) with fancy (folk or artist's fancy) for children or adults, I agree with the fabulous Bill Nye when he said of facts, "They are the framework of history, not the drapery."⁸

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶ *New York Times*, op. cit.

⁷ *Bill Nye's History of the United States*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1894), pp. 5-6.

Mrs. Cober gets her drapery and her framework mixed up. For example (one, among many), she never tells her young reader, directly or indirectly, that Eel River in West Virginia is a mythical stream but leads him to suppose that it is a real river located geographically in relationship to the Monongahela and the Kanawha. Two of Mrs. Cober's fellow-popularizers of Tony Beaver stories do a more responsible job. Anne Malcolmson in *Yankee Doodle's Cousins* (for children), says with economy, "You won't find Eel River on the map. The geographers haven't decided where to put it."⁸ Frank Shay says in *Here's Audacity* (for young adults), "Eel River, a stream of rare beauty that flows into the Celestial Ocean."⁹

When Bill Nye, writing for adults, combined history with his fancy, he clearly declared his intentions and lived up to them. Mrs. Cober, writing for children, does not. Having set her stage with a mislocated mythical river, she rounds up and herds on to that confusing stage an encyclopedia conglomeration of historical names, then drives the names through distorted history. I cannot agree with the respected *Horn Book Magazine* reviewer that this is a "strong thread of history." Mrs. Cober's young readers, in the early stages of wrestling with the problem of learning to distinguish dream from reality, have not reached the place where they know they have a right to demand a declaration of intentions from their author. This does not relieve the author from the responsibility, but on the contrary, increases that responsibility.

Daniel G. Hoffman, in his scholarly volume, *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods*,¹⁰ makes three clear distinctions among the many publications treating American tall-tale heroes. Mrs. Cober's book belongs in his second category—popularization. It merits neither the folklore nor the literary label. Would-be writers of tall-tale books for children (as well as their publishers) can profitably read Mr. Hoffman's enlightening and entertaining chapter, "Lumberjacks in the Nursery."¹¹

The illustrations in Mrs. Cober's *Tony Beaver* book, black and white line drawings, show a comic-book technique. The humor in the characterization is often patronizing; this can be said of some of the humor in the text also.

Expert reviewers for reputable periodicals have an increasing responsibility to deal more responsibly with the increasing amount

⁸ Anne Malcolmson, *Yankee Doodle's Cousins*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1941), p. 109.

⁹ Frank Shay, *Here's Audacity* (New York: The Macaulay Company, 1930), p. 229.

¹⁰ Daniel G. Hoffman, *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), p. 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-123.

of material foisted on children under the label "folklore." 398.2 is a questionable library Dewey classification for Mary E. Cober's volume which appears to me one of the shoddiest of the popularized tall-tale books for children.

Folk Tales from Roumania are translations of what appear to be literary compositions. Written by Ion Creanga as he recollected them from his childhood in the Roumanian village Humulesti in the Carpathians, they were first published by a literary society in Jassey in 1874. The jacket blurb calls the stories "masterpieces of a great Roumanian writer." The combination of motifs and the complication of plot are evidence of the literary nature of the stories rather than of folklore authenticity. The complicated, lengthy sentences in bookish language, lacking the rhythm of the folk tale-teller, also point in that direction. It would be difficult, however, if not impossible, to tell how much of this is the responsibility of the translator.

Librarians can well consider reclassifying this book (as they did in the case of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales) and moving it from the folklore shelves to fiction. Judged as fiction, the story does not move, is clogged with pedantry, lacks imagery and is stilted rather than rhythmic. The pen and ink illustrations merit special commendation for their delightful robust humor, imagination and subtle characterization.

In the format of a child's autograph album, *The Cowboy's Own Brand Book* is a factual treatise on cattle branding, addressed in a respectful manner to the youngest cowboys. A four-page introduction gives a brief history of branding customs and is followed by nine sections called: "How to Read a Complete Brand," "How to Read Single Letters," "The Numbers," "The Figures," "Picture Brands," "Warning Brands," "Rustlers' Brands," "How to Design Your Own Brand" and "How to Keep a Brand Book." The last seven pages are blank forms for a young cowboy's use in recording brands of his own and his neighbor's ranches.

Dr. Emrich, Chief of the Folklore Section of the Library of Congress, has lived in the West and has dependable first-hand knowledge of the folklore of that region. The cattle branding lore in this unique volume, set forth in lucid prose, is complemented by Ava Morgan's simple black and white illustrations.

From personal experience I suggest that any adult who buys and presents this book to a child had better have handy some good suggestions for harmless ways of making and using fixed brands instead of running brands. Serious cowboys finish a day's work before quitting, I have found. And I know one collie dog who, because of my lack of foresight, is more or less permanently branded with

dripping india ink. With hasty hindsight I suggested carving a fixed brand from the half of a potato; and I corralled all hands (adult and juvenile) to cut out three ranches full of paper cattle to be branded with food coloring. Nobody can afford to take this interesting little book lightly.

Holidays Around the World has a commendable moral purpose—religious toleration. In an introductory section called "Everybody Loves a Holiday," Mr. Gaer gives a capsule history of holiday practices, saying, "Most of the holidays of the world are in some way related to the divisions of time—particularly the seasons—created by the sun, the moon and the stars." He then sets forth his point of view that "when we understand the spirit of the holidays of the nations it becomes clear to us that all of them aspire to what all the great religions of the world call the Brotherhood of Man."

Of the seven remaining divisions, five discuss the holidays of the Chinese, the Hindus, the Jews, the Christians and the Moslems. The usual miscellaneous section is called "Other Holidays" and the last, "The World's Newest Holidays." The drawings, many of which are based on historical museum artifacts, indicate a striving for factual accuracy. Yet in technical execution they are often awkward, static and, on the whole, lack distinction.

This is a reference book which teachers and librarians will doubtless make much use of. The author realizes his problem of oversimplification in attempting to encompass the whole world; he could have helped to overcome this, however (and it is to be regretted that he did not) by giving some facts about his sources and listing for teachers and children a dependable bibliography for further reference—a bibliography of reliable anthropologic and folklore materials.

Expert classroom teachers no longer teach children the authoritarian acceptance of all printed words but, rather, encourage them in their natural curiosity to find out how writers come to know all the important things stated in books. They teach children how to accumulate facts they need and want to know and how to check facts for dependability. Makers of encyclopedic books today, whether for infant or for adult consumption, will do well to assume that the child and his teacher will want to ask, "How do you know? Who told you?"

The Soup Stone is a potpourri of seven stories (six "retellings and adaptations," and the title story "built upon motif K112.2 in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*") interlarded with didactic sections about the history of customs, household items and common beliefs. Among the beliefs are: the meaning in shadows and in spots on fingernails; charms connected with salt and carrots; and cures for hiccups and headaches. Historical sections discuss such items as keys,

beds, pots, pins and mirrors. For seasoning, riddles and proverbs are sprinkled here and there throughout the text. An end section called "Some Books of Reference" covering two and a half pages, includes a variety of folklore, historical and antiquarian material. The author, however, does not say whether or not this list represents *her* sources of information. In this same section Miss Leach does state the specific source for each of her seven stories. Mamie Harmon's black and white decorations together with her page called "About the Pictures" is informative and commendable.

Opinions differ about the age of the audience to which this book is directed. *Publishers' Weekly* (1954 Spring Children's Book Number) calls the book "teenage reading." *New York Times* (January 31, 1954) lists and reviews it in the column "For the Younger Readers." Miss Leach does not say nor indicate; but the child, little or big, who reads this book, will want to ask her, "How did you find out these things? Who told you? Who were the archeologists in Peru (page 86) who unearthed a teenage mummy girl with plucked eyebrows?"

It is to be regretted that *The Soup Stone* does not carry more specific and more complete documentation as well as some explanations of the author's methods of "retelling and adaptation."

Ruth Sawyer's *Journey Cake Ho!* is a picture book intended for five and six year olds and a successful picture book, according to my available evidence. Mr. McClosky immediately established rapport with thirty-three uninhibited six-year-old friends of mine who followed his pictures in such minute detail as to point out the sad daisies in the background on page 23; the clothes on the line in the background on page 14 (which brought the comment, "The family must be poor because the clothes are full of holes"); the change of expression on the crow's face on page 19 and on page 39.

They stuck like ticks to Robert McClosky's Johnny and his animals, up hill, down hill, home again and "let's go again." But they did not stick to Ruth Sawyer's story. They liked the rhythm and repetition but wanted their teacher to tell it instead of read it. "I never heard such funny words" said one child after they had stopped the teacher to ask the meaning of "bound out boy," "I'm all in a tucker," "run together a piece of sacking," "a new ma'm" and "the logging road." This slowed the story down too much to suit them.

Ruth Sawyer has tremendous literary prestige as a successful writer for children and deservedly so. But she sometimes appears to subscribe to a general (but to my mind, false) assumption that folk tales are all so simple in meaning that they can all be successfully trimmed down to any size. It seems to me that writers for children and educators had better cultivate patience to let children grow to literature, whether it be Shakespeare or Pappy Skidmore

Skinning His Bear, instead of offering ersatz nursery substitutes. Ruth Sawyer is at her literary best when she leans on her own imagination instead of on folk tales picked up as an itinerant collector in Spain, Ireland, France, Wales, South America or in our southern mountains.

The Beatinest Boy is fiction, honest fiction, a story of a growing-up boy and his Grandma who live a rugged life in the Kentucky mountains. Nowhere does the author or his blurbist call the book "folklore" for Jesse Stuart is no carpetbagger folklorist out to make an easy dollar. He writes honestly, respectfully and understandingly of the people who live in his own home community where he was born and still lives, W-Hollow near Riverton, Kentucky.

However, folklorists interested in studying Kentucky mountain customs can safely bet that Jesse Stuart is not twisting the facts when he tells how David and his Grandma hunted possums and robbed the bee tree. They would do well to recommend this book to teachers and children instead of some of the maverick publications called "folklore" which have received the printed blessings of accepted scholars.

Robert Henneberger's interesting black and white illustrations have the same rugged quality of the story and I expect he can tree a possum and rob a bee tree.

The story, a simple tale unpretentiously told, is Jesse Stuart's first attempt to write for children. If his style seems a little awkward in places, perhaps it may be the result of an honest man standing for the first time before an audience he respects and fears a little. Respect and fear are more promising in a beginning writer for children than the patronizing cuteness rampant in the juvenile book market today.

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Big Mose, Katherine B. Shippen. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953.) 90 pp. \$2.00.

Sam Patch, The High, Wide and Handsome Jumper. Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951.) 39 pp.

A folklore researcher procreates undreamt of progeny these days. Gazing upon the juvenile shelves he may see his own antiquarian heroes brightly refurbished for a new generation, by helpmeets perhaps unknown to him, or he to them. Big Mose first appeared in modern times in two books by Herbert Asbury dealing with old Bowery days. An article of mine in *American Literature* traced the origin of the tall-tale hero to mid-nineteenth century comic farces. Subse-

quently the New York *Compass* ran a feature on the "Paul Bunyan of the Bowery," and two juvenile folk-books included chapters on Mose. Now he has graduated to his own independent volume.

The author builds episodes from the brief tall tales in Asbury. References to Big Mose smoking a two-foot cigar, and blowing its smoke against sailing ships in the East River, or swimming around Manhattan Island in six strokes, or picking up a horse-car in his hand, she expands into little stories. She does not display remarkable inventive powers. Thus for Mose's swimming feat, she contrives a race; everybody backs out when they see Mose, except Al. Mose swims rings around Al, who magnanimously gives him the trophy cup. Miss Shippen never resolves the ethical problem of how to prevent Mose being a law to himself. To reinstate Linda the cigar girl in her lost job, Mose simply takes the keys from the theater manager and closes the building.

Author and publisher commendably refrain from using the word "folklore." If the Paul Bunyan figures were all presented like Big Mose in the present little book, and reviewed in the same non-folkloristic terms, the folklorist would be satisfied. Then these juveniles would have to stand or fall solely on their merits as children's literature.

In contrast to the segmented episodes of Big Mose, the authors of Sam Patch have contrived a continuous narrative. Sam Patch surfaced in the twentieth century in an article I published in the *New York Folklore Quarterly*, which was later condensed in the *American Mercury*. So far this has generated only a strange semi-fictional reworking in *The New Yorker* by Samuel Hopkins Adams, and the present juvenile. To develop a plot and offer a villainous foil to the heroic jumper, Bontemps and Conroy introduce a Western half-horse half-alligator roarer who boasts in the Crockett tradition and jumps mightily for a traveling circus. Sam joins the circus and contests with Hurricane Harry, who mistreats his pet bear, and plays dirty by exchanging Sam's wet bath mat for one bone dry. In a neat touch, the rival jumpers leap from ever higher ladders into ever smaller tubs of water, until Sam fulfills the American tall tale of the high diver who jumps from 225 feet into a damp mat. (On pages 24-25 the publishers cleverly shift the type to permit a sky-piercing double-page illustration of Hurricane Harry's ladder.) At this point the authors' invention collapses, and they change Sam Patch into Superman, who jumps part way across a chasm and back again with a cringing Hurricane Harry in his arms. The proud

boasts of the Western screamer descend to the nadir of "Pretty please and pleasy weasy with honey and jujube jelly on it."

Curiously, when Irwin Shapiro wrote *Yankee Thunder, The Legendary Life of Davy Crockett*, he too invented a villain from folk materials, to explain why two heroes like Crockett and Andy Jackson should be at loggerheads. His rogue derives from the Eastern Yankee peddler, and has Sam Patch in his make-up, being known as Slickerty Sam Patch Thimblerig Skippoweth Branch. This straining and wrenching and direct opposition of the folk-juvenile writers reveals clearly enough their confusion about American folk traditions.

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RECORDS FOR CHILDREN

Follow the Sunset: A Beginning Geography Record with Nine Songs from Around the World. Adapted for recording by Eunice Holsaert and Charity Bailey. From the book by Herman and Nina Schneider. Sung and narrated by Charity Bailey and Robert Emmett. Album No. 706, Children's Series, Folkways Records and Service Corp., 117 West 46th Street, New York 36, New York. 10" 33 1/3 RPM; list, \$4.45.

Let's All Join In. Written by Oscar Brand; sung by Peter Seeger. Fact and Folklore Record No. 403, Young People's Records, Inc., New York City. 10" 78 RPM; no price listed.

Pedro in Brazil. Told and sung by David Pfeffer (Pedro), Sally Sweetland and Lee Sweetland. Record No. 5034, Children's Record Guild, 27 Thompson Street, New York 13, New York. 10" 78 RPM; no price listed.

The three records reviewed here represent two kinds of folklore popularizations. The first two discs are discriminating adaptations of folkloristic material to educational purposes. The last, notwithstanding the *Good Housekeeping* and *Parent's Magazine* seals of approval, is apparently aimed at overworked mothers and teachers who want a cheap canned baby-sitter.

Follow the Sunset takes the child on a twenty-four hour trip around the world, following the sun as it sets. As darkness comes to different parts of the earth and its waters, listening children hear lullabies and native songs sung to the accompaniment of flute, tom-tom or stringed instruments.

The singers and narrator are artists with pleasant speaking and singing voices and their unpretentious manner as they sing and talk

is respectful to both children and folklore. The record drew strong approval from twenty-six ten and eleven-year-old friends of mine who have been studying about time belts and from one eight-year-old who borrowed his father's globe and his mother's help in locating the places as he listened to the record again and again.

In a booklet, which comes with the record, the entire script is given—including songs as well as narration. According to the credit listings on the last page of the booklet, Eunice Holsaert and Charity Bailey composed the words for folk melodies from Nigeria, China, Mexico and Hawaii; the words for "All Through the Night" were H. Boulton's; "Kuma Echa" came from *Songs of Zion* by H. Coopersmith, translated by S. R. Greenberg; "Shenandoah" and "Go Along Lil Doggies" are apparently composites though nothing is said about them nor about the theme song with which the record begins and ends, "Sleep, Baby, Sleep."

Let's All Join In begins with a theme song written in the "folk manner," "It takes everybody to build this land/ The butcher, the doctor and the groceryman/ The men who dig the coal and the men who run the trains/ And the farmer cutting wheat upon the Kansas plains . . ." With threads of narration between, an Indian deer hunting song, "Yankee Doodle," "Chisholm Trail," "The Farmer" (devised), "Erie Canal" and "John Henry" follow the theme song. Peter Seeger accompanies himself on a banjo played folk-fashion.

This record, I am told, is based on an educational movie, though the disc carries no such information. The educational purpose of this recording is not as clear nor as well planned as in *Follow the Sunset*; and mechanically, *Lets All Join In* is a cheap recording; the narration fades to unintelligibility in places. Children have told me they like the man's songs but they can't hear what he says.

Lacking documentation or credit listings of any kind, this material shows little kinship to field recorded folklore; the resemblance might be that of a kissing-cousin.

Pedro in Brazil, narrated by David Pfeffer (a patronizing little boy trained in the Shirley Temple school of dramatics), pretends to be the story of Pedro going to the Carioca festival to hear "the authentic folk songs, accompanied by characteristic instruments" to "give children a real taste of the music of Brazil and the customs of people from other lands." The envelope blurb so informs us.

What the child gets a real taste of here is not folklore but folksy songs and instruments authentically and characteristically Hollywoodized. Fortunately, my young friends have not found this dish tasty.

Of the three records under consideration the first two deserve commendation for their purposes and for what they attempted in execution; there is no condescension to children; no studio crescendos and diminuendos in the singing; and the adaptations of texts are directed toward simplicity instead of garish distortion. Let's hope Charity Bailey and Eunice Holsaert will one day use their considerable talents toward adaptations from field recordings. Let's also hope Peter Seeger finds better unified themes and better record-makers, and that he sticks close to folksongs.

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AREA STUDIES

It's an Old Scottish Custom. Neil McCallum. (New York: Vanguard Press, n.d.) 192 pages. \$3.00.

Traditional Number Rhymes and Games. F. Doreen Gullen. (London: University of London Press, 1950.) x + 155 pp. 5s/-.

Highland Dances of Scotland. William Cameron. (Aberdeen: Aberdeen Journal, n.d.) 68 pp.

For the purposes of folklore study the three books under review are of varying significance; and none of them, it should be added, is specifically aimed at the folklorist. The book of most general appeal, *It's an Old Scottish Custom*, is written by a competent and intelligent popularizer, Neil McCallum, with considerable wit and penetration. It provides an entertaining picture of some outstanding features of the Scottish way of life and may therefore be of real assistance to folklorists who wish to relate specific items of folklore to the general background of the contemporary Scottish scene. The description of the urban Hogmanay celebrations as practiced in Edinburgh today, for instance, relates little in the way of customs that would technically be classified as folkloristic, but it does portray very well the peculiar spirit which animates Edinburgh people on New Year's Eve—a spirit quite different in flavor from that found, let us say, among the throngs in Times Square.

In questions of folklore origins, on the other hand, specialists will sometimes disagree with the author (as in his explanation of witchcraft as a reaction against the joylessness of Presbyterianism), and they will often recall supplementary sources of information not mentioned and perhaps not consulted.

Quite justifiably, of course, the author does not go out of his way to specify sources. He tells the story of Garscadden's reticent guest who knew why his host was lying "sae gash" [ghastly] at his own party. (The host had died, but the guest didn't like to trouble the company with this distressing news because he knew that Garscadden himself would not be one to have spoiled the fun.) McCallum does not tell us, however, that this excellent story (which is now circulating at Harvard, perhaps as the result of McCallum's visit there in 1952) dates back at least to Dean Ramsay's delightful volume, *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*, first published in 1858. Similarly he gives a vivid description of the Selkirk common ridings as observed today but does not refer his reader to the relevant section of *British Calendar Customs: Scotland*. But it may be said that his description is worthy to be included in any new edition of *Calendar Customs* that may appear; and first-hand descriptions are incomparably more desirable than mere secondary documentation.

The next volume, *Traditional Number Rhymes and Games*, has all the appearance of a scientifically prepared work. Published for the Scottish Council for Research in Education by Miss F. D. Gullen, it is intended to make Scottish number rhymes "available to infant teachers" or at least "to serve as a memorandum to the teacher of the material." It contains 425 items, some recorded in English, some in Braid Scots. Many of them have apparently (the Preface and Introduction are far from clear on this point) been collected from oral tradition by the editor and her collaborators. But—and this is a cardinal but—it does not specify the source of a single item! There is not even a suggestion as to what part of Scotland the majority came from, let alone who recorded them, where, when, and from whom. In a book that contains newly collected and perhaps hitherto unrecorded materials, even though it disclaims being "a textbook for teaching purposes," such an omission is, to put the matter gently, somewhat disappointing—not to say infuriating. Some folklorists may also be troubled by the editor's omission to sift native Scottish rhymes from those, such as "Gay go up and gay go down, To ring the bells of London town," of alien origin.

Possibly, however, infant teachers will be less exacting than the irascible folklorists in their judgment of this book. They too will find some disappointment in the absence of music from the record of rhymes customarily sung, and they will certainly have to consult more detailed references if they want to teach children how precisely to play some of the games alluded to. But teachers will undoubtedly welcome the wealth of Miss Gullen's material; and folk-

lorists may well hope that the book succeeds in preserving on the lips of Scottish children such picturesque rhymes as No. 377:

The horny-goloch is an awesome beast,
Soople and scaly;
It has twa horns, an' a hantle o' feet.
An' a forkie tailie.

William Cameron's *Highland Dances of Scotland* deals with a custom which now lies on the borderline between folk-culture and urban culture. Today the Highland dances are performed at Scottish games and gatherings both in the homeland and in innumerable outposts of Scottish settlement. In contradistinction to the folk dances fostered by the Scottish Country Dance Society, they are essentially competitive; and the chests of the more successful little performers are often inadequate to bear their burden of medals won in exhibitions. The standard repertoire includes the native Highland Fling, Sword Dance, and Shean Trews, and, as a concession to other lands, the Irish Jig and the Sailor's Hornpipe. Whatever the origin of these dances, the steps and positions are now highly formalized; the instructor's terminology is largely French; and prize-winners must perform with the precision of ballet-dancers. Mr. Cameron gives a clear and reliable description of each of these dances along with diagrams, photographs, and music; and he similarly describes the exhibition form of the native Foursome Reel and the Reel of Tulloch.

With a lack of dogmatism not always cultivated by dancing masters he remarks that "new steps are continually being invented and are accepted as correct as long as they are authentic and are in their own original traditional category," and with a winning modesty he appeals "for any correction of any part." His descriptions are laudably clear and convincingly authoritative; and, though he cautions his readers that "an actual teacher of dancing is almost a necessity for a beginner," he has produced a book which should be of real assistance to dancers and of considerable interest to folklorists who merely wish to sit and watch.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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A List of American Folksongs Currently Available on Records. Compiled by Archive of American Folksong of the Library of Congress. (Washington: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953.) 176 pages. \$.60.

All folklore scholars will welcome the issuance of the detailed subject-guide to Class G, the category under the Library of Congress classification system which includes folklore. This carefully indexed and cross-indexed compendium makes more readily available the folklore materials in that library and in others using its system. Mr. David Judson Haykin and his associates are to be congratulated upon their thoroughness in preparing this up-to-date revision of Class G; but the fact, however, remains that for the scholar of folklore the arrangement of topics over which they labored is an unsatisfactory one. That folklore items are here classified in a way that proves diffuse, repetitive and unwieldy is perhaps as much the responsibility of folklorists themselves as it is of librarians, who can only be guided in their classification by the categories established by specialists in each field. Perhaps the failings of Class G reflect a hiatus between folklorists and librarians where there should have been a cooperative working-out of their common problems.

The chief categories under G which will interest folklorists are these: Anthropology, GN; Folklore, GR; Manners and Customs (General), GT; and Recreation, GV. Let not the unwary folklorist search for his data under GR only; he is at once informed (on p. 251) that Folk Literature is listed elsewhere under PN 905-1008; folk music scores under M 1627-1844, and history of folk music under ML 3545-3780. Thus it is at once evident that from the standpoint of folklore scholarship, some of the most important genres of folklore are not listed in the folklore category. (Although folk literature is in PN, folk riddles appear in GR 975; *q.v.* for PN cross-references for chapbooks, fables, poetry, proverbs. Ballads are not mentioned. Geographical myths and imaginary voyages are listed under Geography, G 560.)

In subclass GR itself, folklore is classified under four categories: (1) "Individual folktales, A-Z, including history and variants" come under GR 75; one hopefully assumes that the titles of the tales correspond to those in the Type and Motif Indices; (2) by race, GR 93-98; (3) by country, GR 100-398; (4) "Folklore relating to special subjects," GR 440-975. These categories obviously allow much redundancy. In the case of American folklore particularly, does the inclusion of the folklore of occupations (GR 890) as a subheading under "Folklore relating to special subjects" reflect the proper significance of occupational lore? It should be noted that all instances of folk customs among primitive peoples are not listed under folklore but under Anthropology, subclass Ethnology and Ethnography, GN 400-499, except for American Indians, for which see E 51-99, F 1219 and 1434. Thus an investigator of witchcraft or magic must consult both GN 475 (for primitive instances) and GR 500-600 (for folklore). On the other hand, the scholar investigating the folklore of festivals must consult not only GR 930, "Folklore relating to special days, seasons, etc.," but also—and here he is on his own for there is no cross-reference—he must look under Manners and Customs, GT 3910-4995, "Customs relative to public and social life: Festivals. Holidays." The folklore of foods does not show up under Folklore, unless it be under GR 950, "Miscellaneous, A-Z"; but GT 2850-3030 gives "Eating and drinking customs." For customs relating to the life cycle one must search under GR 440-465 for folklore, under GN 478-486 for primitive practices; and under GT 2400-2840 for "Customs relative to private life."

However useful the Library of Congress classification may be for research workers in other disciplines, in folklore it does not seem to be based upon the most serviceable conceptual approaches to the problems encountered in that field. As this system is now displacing the Dewey decimal classification in many libraries, one looks ahead with dismay to the difficulties it may place in the way of efficient folklore research. One should not, perhaps, expect the classification of a general library system to reflect the particular needs of one interdisciplinary specialty; it may be that the set-up of GR described above actually is the best one for a general library. Yet class GR as it is now constituted can be made more serviceable to those most likely to consult it only by the most scrupulous network of cross-indexing. The present paper-bound synopsis of class G is an essential key to the widely-scattered shelves in the Library of Congress which house works folklorists need to consult. It should be read with care.

The Library of Congress exists to serve the people, and its bibliographies, supported by public funds, must necessarily meet public needs. Thus *A List of American Folksongs Currently Available on Records* was prepared to answer inquiries from the general public. "No critical evaluation of the recordings has been made, nor is any distinction here noted between recordings made in the field of untrained singers and those made under studio conditions by professional artists. Such distinctions and evaluations are properly the province of the professor and student studying the material." The titles of records and albums are accordingly listed in alphabetical order with no attempt at classification, although an index of album titles and performers' names does in a rough way direct the reader to genres. For the scholar, this is not an improvement over the somewhat chaotic arrangement in Ben Gray Lumpkin's *Folksongs on Records, Issue III*, but it does have the virtue of listing most of the folksong recordings commercially available.

There was a day when the Library of Congress issued a bibliography of recorded folk music which was selective only of the most authentic versions, and analyzed the performance on each disc as well as providing the commercial record number. Neither the present list nor Professor Lumpkin's ambitious venture seem to me as useful for the scholar in these respects as was the mimeographed list Alan Lomax prepared while at the Library a decade ago. May we hope that in addition to this list prepared for "librarians, record collectors and other interested persons," the Folklore Archive will soon again prepare a selective, up-to-date discography for the folklore scholar and musicologist? Such a list would be not only a convenience to the public but a solid contribution to the knowledge of America's folksong traditions.

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Daniel G. Hoffman

FOLK ART

Early American Wood Carving. Erwin O. Christensen. (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1952.) 149 pp., 52 figures, 12 plates. \$4.00.

Early American Design Motifs. Suzanne E. Chapman. (New York: Dover Publications, 1952.) 191 pp., 353 figures, 10 plates. \$3.95.

Mr. Christensen's book is a comprehensive survey of a form of American art about which very little has been written. The author,

Curator of the Index of American Design in the National Gallery of Art, is certainly well-qualified for this task. Most of his illustrations are from the treasurehouse of reproductions gathered from nearly every state; yet it is surprising to discover that eight of the color plates are reprinted through the courtesy of *Fortune Magazine*.

The book covers every type of wood carving done in early America, from the skillful work of craftsmen trained in the traditions of architectural and furniture decorations, ships' carvings, and carousel figures, to the many types of folk art such as shop figures, tavern signs, weathervanes, decoys, and New Mexico bultos.

It is difficult to say just what is typically American about these works, yet most of the carvings illustrated have a distinctively native character. One element they have in common is simplification. This is evident in the New Mexico bultos as well as in the Yankee figure-heads or the cigar store Indians of fairly recent years. Another common element is an uncompromising determination which seems to be a typical American characteristic. Perhaps this is because most woodcarvings were done for utilitarian purposes and very few of the carvers were overly concerned with the aesthetic aspects of their work. Yet that work is aesthetically satisfying.

Mr. Christensen's subject is as interesting for what we don't know as for what we do know about it. For instance we do know that the carousel with its rotating platform was developed only in 1879, but we don't know much at all about the men who carved the carousel figures. Then too, although there is a family resemblance between the American and traditional European carousel figures, we don't know whether American carvers inherited these traditions at first or second hand. At any rate the element of simplification is present in the American carousel figures.

The chapter on "Household Articles" contains an interesting miscellany of objects which are especially charming for their primitive qualities. Included are the carvings done by sailors, lumberjacks, "forty-niners" in their idle hours, as well as the many things carved in the home such as toys, butter molds, decoys, and weathervanes. Mr. Christensen writes, "American wood carving is apt to be utilitarian, and it is largely without the time-consuming elaboration which ill-fitted the strenuous life of the pioneer. Even the weathervane fulfilled a purpose, and whatever was carved was done for more than a show of skill." The whole way of life of the carvers was austere, and they were in the habit of seeking the most expedient way to do any job. By simplifying the forms they were unconsciously applying a very good formula for achieving an aesthetically satis-

fying work of art. Their work should serve to show that technical skill alone does not deserve the emphasis European craftsmen have given it. Another important ingredient for achieving aesthetic satisfaction is sincerity, and this they definitely had. The traditions that were forgotten and the skills that were lost actually made for an individual form of art which often surpasses the European counterparts.

Suzanne Chapman's *Early American Design Motifs* contains 353 black-and-white illustrations and eight color plates, but there is no written matter other than a three-page introduction and a complete list of black-and-white motifs and of sources. The illustrations are all clear and accurate.

This book should be a valuable reference source for anyone who wants authentic designs for restoration or reproduction of early American craft work. The motifs are taken from a wide variety of sources: from tole ware, wrought iron, pottery, glass, embroidery, quilting, as well as designs from samples of penmanship, furniture stencils, fractur, and weathervanes. There are beautifully simple designs from New England wall stencils and elaborate motifs from the Pennsylvania Dutch crafts. Besides the usual English, French, Dutch, and German influences noticeable in early American motifs there are also exotic designs from crewel work, which definitely show the influence of printed cottons brought from India.

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Eugene Van Wye

FOLKSONG

A Garland of Mountain Song from the Repertoire of the Ritchie Family of Viper, Kentucky. Edited with notes by Jean Ritchie, with piano accompaniment by Hally Wood Gordon. Line drawings by Alberta Fordini. (New York: Broadcast Music, Inc., 1953.) 69 pp. \$2.95.

The twenty-four songs in this garland are not all in the oldest Ritchie tradition, some having been brought home from school and shared with that prolific singing family, two being picked up from an Irish girl in New York, and one, the Bedfordshire May Day Carol, being straight English. But these additions all bear the stamp of oral tradition, and they are all presently part of the Ritchie repertoire. That girl Jenny (Gentle Fair, Put the Kettle on, Get Round) contributes to the group of play-party and satirical songs. In this

latter category are also the fabliau-like "Little Devils" and the broader "Will the Weaver." The mysterious "Nottamun Town" deserves greater familiarity than it now has. There is a bit of hill-billy and a bit of pseudo-hillbilly, all put in their proper places by editorial note. Some of the longer Ritchie ballads, of which "Barbara Allen" is the only example here, will be welcome when they appear—"Geordie," for instance, and a unique "Little Musgrave" with the Bucklesfordbury stanza intact. The high point is a splendid white spiritual, "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah," the melodic decoration of which, will, however, baffle the sight-reader. This sort of song must be heard, rather than read off the printed page. All in all, a popular sequel to "The Swapping Song Book," and tempting bait for the book which we are led to expect will appear soon, a full-length portrait of the Singing Ritchies.

The simple piano settings, "if you *must* use a piano," are generally as successful as arrangements of modal tunes can be. One regrets the loss of Mixolydian flavor in "Christ was born in Bethlehem", for instance. In the modern idiom line drawings against backgrounds in three different colors are gay and lively and suggestive, if perhaps too sophisticated-pseudo-folk for some tastes. Alan Lomax, Jean Ritchie's first advisor, contributes a foreword, and a fine photograph of Jean and Carl Sandburg, her other mentor, concludes the book.

One should mention, without undue stress, however, some slips in proof reading and the print-through which occasionally interferes with easy reading. One wishes, too, that Mr. Lomax in his excellent introduction had cared for some details, mentioning, for instance, the part played by the Hindman as well as the Pine Mountain School in preserving mountain songs, for half the Ritchies went to that school; and that he had not categorized these songs as "backwoods," at the same time making a startling comparison of the Ritchies to the Bach-family.

But the qualifications in this review should not color the value of this book, as part of the story of folksong in America. The contributions of the Ritchie family, book by book, are making a highly significant addition to this story. Jean Ritchie combines objective comment, performance, and information to a marked degree. The unifying force in this book is found in the editor's own running comment, brief, simple, factual yet informed with feeling; warm with humor, never sentimental. Here is her concluding paragraph:

When I listen to these songs I can hear the whole hard way of my forbears' lives in the mountains. I can feel their anger at the land

and their love of these rocky hillsides that bent their backs and made the young old before their time. I remember their joy in the simple things of home and I think back on the wild, bloody, violent ways of these same gentle people. I listen to these slow, powerful, lamenting hymns and I hear their trust in the goodness and loving wisdom of the great Jehovah, their dread of death and their hope for a new life "over yonder on the golden shore," a hope that made hardships here seem little and not worth complaining about. And I remember my folks' dignity, their humility, their strength and pride. Their songs are noble, as they are.

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Evelyn K. Wells

PROVERBS

Narodni Prypovidky - Chastivky pro Nacional' No - Vyzvol'nu Borot'bu 1917-21 RR. [Folk Proverbs and Sayings about the Liberation War of Ukraine in 1917-21.] H. Sen'ko. (Buenos Aires: Pereymona Publishing Co., 1953.) 46 pp. No price listed.

This is an interesting collection of anti-Soviet sayings ("chastivky") from the time of the East European revolution and the immediately following period of the national liberation war in Ukraine. Here are about 50 rhymed sayings and songs, methodically arranged according to the historical events and supplied in each case with an explanatory interpretation. Typical are:

Ah, the apple went away (from the apple tree)
Ukraine separated itself from Russia. (p. 12)

When Kerensky was, he led everything well,
He made money from the paper, and the gold took
with himself. (p. 13)

I am sitting on a barrel,
the barrel is rolling,
and the Soviet rule
will not come back. (p. 21)

The material of Sen'ko's book refers to the early 1920's. All the immense number of modern folk sayings, jokes, anecdotes about the Soviet regime not only in Ukraine but in the entire Soviet Union and the so-called satellite countries awaits its researchers and collector.

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J. B. Rudnyckyj

Books Received

Akalin, Lutfullah Sami, *Erzurum Bilmecelesi*. (Istanbul: Erzurum Lisesi Folklor Kolu Yayınlari, No. 1, 1954.) vii + 112 pp. No price listed.

Briggs, K. M., *The Personnel of Fairyland*. (Oxford: Alden Press, Ltd., 1953.) 228 pp. 9s/6d.

Fraser, Norman, editor, *International Catalogue of Recorded Folk Music*. (New York: Oxford University Press, for the International Folk Music Council, 1954.) 201 pp. \$2.60.

McDowell, Flora L., *Folk Dances of Tennessee*. (Delaware, Ohio: Cooperative Recreation Service, n.d.) 64 pp. \$1.00.

Mercer, A. S., *The Banditti of the Plains*. Foreword by W. H. Kittrell. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954.) 1 + 195 pp. \$2.00.

Murko, Matija, *Tragom Srpsko-Hrvatske Narodne Epike*. (Zagreb: Opera Academiae Scientiarum et Artium Slavorum Meridionalium, Vol. 41-42, 1951.) 937 pp. No price listed.

Murray, Margaret, *The Divine King in England: A Study in Anthropology*. (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1954.) 279 pp. 25s.

Parry, Milman, and Albert Bates Lord, *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*. Musical transcriptions by Bela Bartok; prefaces by J. H. Finley, Jr., and Roman Jakobson. (Cambridge & Belgrade: Harvard University Press and Serbian Academy of Science, 1954.) Vol. I, English translation. xvi + 479 pp. \$12.50.

Pourrat, Henri, *A Treasury of French Tales*, trans. Mary Mian. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953.) x + 240 pp. \$3.00.

Ritchie, Jean, *A Garland of Mountain Song*. (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1953.) 69 pp. \$2.95.

Scots Border Ballads, read by George S. Emerson. (Thomas Tenney Records, Berkeley, Cal.) No. TG-1001. LP. 12".

Stevens, Halsey, *The Life and Music of Bela Bartok*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.) xvi + 366 pp. \$7.50.

Withers, Carl, and Sula Benet, *The American Riddle Book*. (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1954.) 157 pp. \$2.75.

Yiddisher Folklor: A Journal of Jewish Folklore Issued by the Y. L. Cahan Folklore Club. (Yiddish Scientific Institute—Yivo, 535 West 123 Street, New York, 27, N.Y.) Vol. I, no. 1 (January 1954), 24 pp.

Midwest Folklore

Subscriptions and Editorial Information

Annual subscriptions to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* are \$3.00 to libraries, schools, and individuals not members of cooperating regional folklore societies; members of cooperating regional societies may subscribe to *MIDWEST FOLKLORE* for \$2.50 if their subscriptions are made through the treasurers of their respective societies. Single copies may be obtained for \$1.00. Correspondence regarding subscriptions and business matters should be directed to the Business Manager, Mrs. Joan Kirtley, Library, Room, 41, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

Articles for publication should be submitted to the appropriate Regional Editor or directly to the Editor, W. Edson Richmond, Department of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Books for review should be sent to the Review Editor, Daniel G. Hoffman, Department of English, Columbia University, New York, New York. Offprints of articles and references intended for mention in the "Annual Bibliography of Midwestern Folklore" should be sent to Richard Dorson, Department of History, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan.

Manuscripts submitted for publication should be typed double-spaced on 8½ x 11 paper; footnotes should be typed double-spaced with a triple space between each note at the end of the article. Titles of books and journals should be italicized; titles of articles, chapters of books, poems, reports, etc., should be placed in quotation marks. A style sheet is available on request.